

**Intimacy and Investment in Canterbury Thoroughbred Horse Racing: A Study
in Equine Anthropology**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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'Horses – if God made anything more beautiful, He kept it for Himself'.

Author unknown

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with equine attachment as a form of interspecies fictive kinship, in relation to the practices, social relations, and motivations of participant groups within the Canterbury thoroughbred racing industry. Exploring the interconnections between intimacy and investment, as both financial and emotional commitments, the different sectors of the industry are analyzed as actor-network assemblages in which boundaries between professional, economic, and social relations are porous. The thesis argues that the parameters of a distinct equine community are delineated through regulated forms of haptic access. Distinctions regarding those who are and are not permitted to touch horses, articulates with a regime of risk regulation, which is more broadly explored in its physical, social, financial, and emotional dimensions. Also integral to the character of this networked community of practitioners is the symbolism of naming and branding thoroughbreds, as well as the secular rituals of the auction and the race-day. Conceived as a naturalcultural phenomenon, the race is analyzed in terms of the cross-species meanings and experiences of jockeys and apprentices, who are understood as representatives of an occupational sub-culture. Finally, this thesis also explores the preponderance of women in South Island racing; charting the path by which they have successfully adopted traditionally male-dominated roles.

Aims of thesis

The aims of my thesis are to identify the participants in the industry and to question what roles they play. In order to understand how these participants relate to each other, I will categorise different participant groups within their specific sectors, identifying what motivates them and the nature of their specific relationships with the horses. What are their roles as individuals, their functioning as a group and their interaction with their particular equines?

Drawing from Actor Network Theory, I aim to show how the racing industry is a network of 'assemblages' between humans and horses. What evidence is there that the horses are more than mere commodities? To what extent is there a tension between social and economic motivation as opposed to natural human emotion for the horses? How is everyday life on the stud-farm or at the racing stables ordered by important sales (such as the Karaka Yearling sale) or races (The Canterbury Cup Carnival) that structure the ultimate goals of the human participants? The use of natureculture theory enables the components of human-equine interactions in this industry to be contextualized. How are the identities of human and horse redefined through their interaction and what patterns emerge as a result?

I aim to demonstrate development and changes within their historical context, drawing on elements that have a distinct role in shaping the industry into the way it functions today. One of these elements is the issue of domestication. I question to what extent human involvement in 'creating' this breed, has been motivated by social and financial factors, as opposed to emotional reasons. What are the consequences of human intervention? What are the current, evolving issues of domestication that the local industry faces? I compare the industry in Canterbury with examples of racing ethnographies conducted in both England and the U.S.A. in order to establish what they have in common, and how they differ. Although Canterbury is far removed from the rest of the racing world in terms of distance, my aim is to demonstrate the significance of this topic in multi-sited ethnography, drawing on regional, national and international influences that affect the nature of this industry (thereby focussing on the racing assemblage). Through my focus on the assemblages that are evident between the three main participant sectors of the industry: breeding, the auction sector and the training sector, I aim to demonstrate how the participants form a community of practice. Further to this aim, I examine how the horse, the central focus of that community, is given a sense of belonging. Is this attachment between humans and horses on an intimate level similar to kinship?

In this thesis, I provide an analysis of the race-course and the rituals which give particular meaning to the participants. Drawing on Fox's categories of participant groups in British horse-racing, I seek to explore similarities and differences in the

range of participant groups at the Canterbury racecourse. Further to this aim, I explore the particular practices of these constituent groups. What does their particular practice reveal about their motivation for attending or participating in the race? I pursue Kon Kuiper's call for an analysis of the actual race, with the aim of describing the nature of the race and the meaning that this gives to the cultural performance (2004). How do the primary participants relate to each other and what are the cultural norms that influence their behaviour? Are there sometimes conflicting norms and motivations? For example, to what extent do the jockeys balance their responsibilities to the trainers and owners (social and financial investment) with their emotional 'connection' to the horse? To what extent do these factors control the emerging career of the jockey apprentice?

A focus on the actual race points to the importance of the element of risk which permeates the industry. My aim was to deconstruct risk into its relevant parts, looking at the importance of each part in terms of the participants' activities and motivations. What are the constituent elements of risk within the industry? How do the participants relate their daily activities to their perception of this risk? To what extent does a sharing of these risk elements contribute towards defining the racing community?

I have focussed on the role of women particularly due to the historical definitions of racing as 'a man's world'. Contrasts with other racing ethnographies indicate that there is a unique situation in New Zealand and specifically in the Canterbury industry with the rapid influx of female participants into traditional male occupations (most notably the jockey profession) (Case 1991, Cassidy 2002, Fox 2005). Drawing on Tollich's conclusions on the regional emergence of women in this profession, I aim to demonstrate that this situation continues to develop due to economic factors, but that the emotional connection of women to horses also plays a significant role (1996). I aim to understand what draws women into the Canterbury racing industry. Do female participants in the industry have a different emphasis on the three base motivations? What is the nature of male-female partnerships within the industry in this region?

Chapter One: Introduction

"I wish I was one (a horse). Best thing you can have in the whole world. I just seem to get along with them; it's natural. It just seems so easy compared to other things in the world."

Conversation with apprentice jockey Jessica, 2012.

1.1 Personal motivation

My own personal obsession with horses began after I saw one for the first time. This became a passion fuelled by grandparents who were both accomplished equestrians; my grandfather having competed in everything from riding in a mounted regiment, to amateur steeplechase. Although I rode only intermittently and non-competitively as a child, my passion for horses continued and when at the age of seventeen I was taken to the races at Gosforth Park (Johannesburg, South Africa) for the first time I became aware of a whole new world where the horse was a major participant. My choice to research the socio-economic aspects of the South African thoroughbred racing industry in the heart of the breeding district (for a B. A. Hons. thesis) saw many hours spent observing human-horse interaction. This choice was emotionally motivated; without the thoroughbred racing industry, there would be no thoroughbreds. It is doubtful that the breed would survive purely as a sport horse or farm hack; the fine features that have been bred specifically for speed on the track, are not sought after in their entirety by the non-racing equine sector. Racing keeps this particular breed of horse alive, so that it may be enjoyed both by racing enthusiasts and horse-lovers alike. In a rapidly modernising world, this might be the only opportunity for many to get close to these magnificent animals. Owning and riding retired thoroughbreds, I have experienced the spiritual connection of the 'Centaur' relationship¹, as well as the financial burden and the emotional heartache that goes hand-in-hand in a relationship with a horse. It is thus partly through personal experience that my research has been structured in this manner.

1.2 Theoretical overview

Scientific research concerning horses has been dominated largely by veterinary or agriculturally-related issues, and it is only recently that the area of anthrozoology has come into focus (Budiansky 1997: 3). This field of human-animal studies emerged in the 1990's and includes a multitude of interdisciplinary studies drawing academic

¹ See Thompson, K. 2011. 'Theorising rider-horse relations: An ethnographic illustration of the Centaur metaphor in the Spanish Bullfight' in Taylor, N. & Signal, and T. (eds.) *Theorizing Animals: Rethinking Humananimal Relations*. Boston: Brill. The Centaur metaphor refers to the 'isopraxis phenomenon' or 'reciprocal induction'; theory advocated in 'natureculture' studies to indicate the joining of human and animal minds/bodies (Harraway 2008:229).

attention to the nature and benefits of the human-animal relationship. The emergence of multi-species ethnography saw a focus on the role of non-human organisms in shaping socio-cultural life as well as how human culture affects the lives of these organisms (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010:545). This has led to a greater awareness by ethnographers of the natureculture boundary with more consciousness of the animal as part of culture rather than adjacent to it (Ibid: 548). Shapiro and De Mello identify the value of Critical Animal Studies in critiquing animal-based organisations in order to theoretically advocate for the welfare of animals (2010: 311). I have chosen not to take a CAS perspective in this thesis. While the institution of thoroughbred horse-racing might be constructed of practices which theoretically are questionable in terms of the rights of the animal, it was not my intention to critique the industry, but rather to provide an ethnographic study of it.

Researchers such as Elizabeth Lawrence (1985), Audrey Wipper (2000), Rebecca Cassidy (2002, 2003, 2005, 2007), Keri Brandt (2004, 2009), Sam Hurn (2008) and Latimer & Birke (2009) have paid attention to the specific contribution that can be made through an analysis of this bond, leading to the concept of equine-anthropology as a plausible and valid field for ethnographic research. The horse-racing industry has become of relevance in social-science research fairly recently, with ethnographies on aspects of American racing (Case 1984, 1991, Larsen 2006, Cassidy 2007) and the British thoroughbred industry (Cassidy 2002, Fox 2005, Velija & Flynn 2010) drawing attention to a variety of relevant issues. These include the racing industry as localized communities, ritual, status and symbolism and the role of women in a traditionally male-orientated industry. Although researchers have briefly identified the connection between humans and horses in this industry, there is as yet, little research done into the human-equine relationship in racing, and the motivational factors at play for the human participants. In his focus on multispecies ethnography, Fuentes draws attention to the fact that human-animal relations are controlled by their environments and contain a web of social and economic interactions (2010: 607). Similarly, Donna Haraway states that in drawing together human and animal in naturecultures, identities are re-formed through this interaction and have consequent 'patterns' that emerge (2006:110). Through a focus on the thoroughbred racing industry, a reflection on the different areas of human-horse interaction produces an understanding of how human cultural relations transpire. In a similar respect, the thoroughbred is seen in its complexity, rather than merely as a 'tool' to serve the purposes of the human participants (Haraway 2008: 206). Human identities are shaped by the roles they play in the thoroughbred assemblages, be it jockeys, trainers, stable-hands, owners, racing officials or spectators. As Haraway contends, their relationships of symbiosis with the animals create who they are as humans (2008: 219, 220).

1.3 Thoroughbreds in New Zealand

New Zealand has a long and rich history of association with the international world of the horse and thoroughbred racing in particular. It was a New Zealander, Harold Hampton, who first analysed and translated the secretive breeding philosophies of master thoroughbred breeder, Roberto Tesio (Cassidy 2007: 50). The Tesio computer programme is now utilised internationally by the breeders of thoroughbreds, providing an advanced scientific approach to animal husbandry. Not to be out-done by the rest of the world, it was New Zealand (Chatham Islands) that laid claim to the first horse race in the year 2000, while the country's own 'love-affair' with the thoroughbred champion sire, Sir Tristram, is preserved through a road named in his honour in Auckland. The town of Cambridge is noted as the heart of thoroughbred breeding country and pays homage, unusually, to the mare and foal, rather than to a stallion as is customary in other examples around the world (see Illustration 1)².



Illustration 1: Mare and foal statues, Main Street Cambridge, New Zealand.

1.3.1 Scope of the thesis

It is perhaps in the region of Canterbury, that the human connection with horses is most clearly visible. Approaching Christchurch from the air, one cannot help but notice the large number of horse-tracks laid out neatly below and the familiar

² Statues of mares are rare, but New Zealand claims a second memorial to the mare; in March 2012, a statue in honour of Sunline was unveiled at Ellerslie Racecourse (Auckland) to honour the memory of that mare's noteworthy racing career.

frustration of getting caught behind a horse-float whenever travelling on Canterbury roads, is all too common. Rural Canterbury is characterised by many roadside paddocks with horses, while the familiar sight of riders or drivers in sulkies is found on the minor country roads. Once noted as the heart of the thoroughbred industry in New Zealand, Canterbury is now the centre for Harness racing, a shift in emphasis which draws largely on the high financial cost associated with thoroughbred ownership, training and breeding, as opposed to that of the standardbred. This aspect will be discussed further in chapter 3, focussing on the history of the thoroughbred horse.

1.3.2 Symbolism of the horse

Social scientists Berry and Lawrence, and Biologist Lynda Birke (2008), authorities on human-animal relations, draw attention to the wealth of symbolism and meaning that humans attribute to the image of the horse (Berry 2008 and Lawrence 1985) (Birke 2008). In his analysis of animal kinship in native American society, Howard Harrod claims that the strongest cultural symbols associated with animals in North America are those animals which depict the human ability to shape and control nature and to remodel it to suit human purposes (2000:124). This is strongly evident in the form of the thoroughbred. In her book 'Horse', Elaine Walker analyses the success of horse imagery used in film and advertising, claiming that it is due to the symbolism of freedom and giving the example of the Ferrari-horse (2008:181). In New Zealand, the prancing black stallion that was used for many years as a symbol for the National Bank epitomises this notion. Horses and racing are ingrained in our lives in New Zealand, whether we follow the industry or not.

1.4 Categorisation of participants

In order to describe and analyze the social network of actors in this industry, this thesis will be divided into the relevant working sections, namely the breeding sphere (including the stud-farm), the auctions, the training sphere (including the training stables) and the race-track (including the primary and secondary participants). I argue that despite the stereotype of owners³ being largely motivated by financial gain, very few participants make a profit or even break even. Participation in racing in this respect is not a good financial investment. Despite the social benefits of racehorse ownership, such as exclusive facilities at the racecourse and being identified as someone with money to spend, these are largely influenced by economic factors. Although social benefits might be significant enough for some owners, I suggest that financial motivation alone cannot be seen as strong enough to

³ This category by definition includes all breeders, who have shares in at least one of the horses they have bred and later raced and most if not all trainers, who also tend to have financial interests in at least one horse.

maintain an interest in this pursuit. Similarly, equine intimacy or emotional attachment alone is insufficient motivation for investing large amounts of money in this venture. These factors (social and economic motivation as well as love of horses) are given meaning by their context within the three sectors of the industry (the stud farm, auction and racing stables) as well as on race-day.

1.5 Chapter overview

In this thesis, I have identified the main aspects of methodology used in my fieldwork, noted in chapter 2. This locates my research in terms of multi-sited ethnography as well as the 'bounded' field-site and draws on the particular nature of conducting ethnography 'at home'. As we shall see in this chapter, the problems associated with conducting participant observation in this highly regulated industry necessitate a strong focus on observation. This chapter highlights the nature of industry regulations that required a strong emphasis on interviewing, as well as the importance of fieldnotes in noting context and specific aspects of daily life (Sanjek 1990: 19).

As we shall see in chapter 3, an historical perspective on thoroughbred racing in New Zealand and Canterbury in particular, allows for a contextualisation of participants, their relationships and practices within the modern system. In questioning the motivation of participants, historical trends are important in depicting processes of both continuity and change. Canterbury thoroughbred racing is based on traditional British racing norms shaped by a distinct colonial emphasis. The social and financial factors associated with race-horse ownership by the upper-classes are still present to a certain extent in that racehorse ownership remains an elitist past-time, but has more recently been made accessible to the general public through syndication. One of the interesting findings of this thesis was that emotional attachment to or fictive kinship with horses was found throughout the history of racing in New Zealand. Continuity of this aspect is noted with examples of attachment through daily contact and sharing in daily life experiences between human and horse.

In this thesis, a basic overview of domestication is seen to be of great relevance to the emergence of the thoroughbred breed. As we shall see in chapter 4, domestication is of current significance in academic discourse thereby locating local practices within current trends (Ingold 2000, DeMello 2007 and Cassidy 2007). In this chapter, I note that the thoroughbred is a breed formed purely for racing purposes, genetically altered over the centuries by humans through selective breeding. I also take into consideration the fact that domestication started with human adaptation to incorporate animals (DeMello 2007: 68). This leads to the question of whether the industry is adapted by the specific nature of the

thoroughbred. Through an analysis of thoroughbred domestication, I note Haraway's concept of the blending of natureculture, rather than a traditionalistic, contrasting demarcation of the nature and culture boundaries (2006, 2008). Domestication is noted as a continual process (Ingold 1992:53). In this respect, current issues such as artificial insemination are discussed.

In this thesis, the cyclic character of the racing industry is analysed, based on the racing and breeding calendars and on the interconnectedness of the horse breeding, horse auction, and horse racing sectors. In chapter 5: The Stud farm, I use both Schusky's (1972) and Sahlin's (2011) analyses of kinship to examine the status of the racehorse for those who own and care for it (Schusky 1972) (Sahlin 2011). One of the interesting findings in this sector was that chemical tattooing of New Zealand horses is visually symbolic of a distinct sense of belonging, an element that extends beyond that of the thoroughbred to those who handle it and interact within the different sectors. Similarly, I found that nick-naming of thoroughbreds with a paddock-name is characteristic of membership within the equine racing community and provides further evidence of human-equine fictive-kinship.

Chapter 6: The auction encompasses the valuable contribution of Rebecca Cassidy in interpreting this practice as both financially and emotionally significant. In this chapter, Moore and Myerhoff's 'formal properties' of secular ritual are used to analyse ritual (1977). Cassidy's suggestion of 'falling in love' with the thoroughbred at the auction is depicted through the ritualised viewing of the horse by potential owners, through a number of important stages (2005). The ability to speak and understand 'horse' as a dialect identified by Cassidy, is made clear through distinct references made by the auctioneer. This too creates a dichotomy between knowledgeable insiders within the racing community, and less knowledgeable outsiders and draws on the human relation to the horse, with the thoroughbred as a central actor.

As we shall see in chapter 7, the development of an equine ethic and a passion for racing is evident in the training profession. Kirrilly Thompson's 'longitudinal' perspective of the race as an equine event (seen in its context as one of a number of practices over time), lends meaning to the daily practice of exercising and training the racehorse in order to achieve success in the race (2010). This ties strongly with Donna Haraway's naturecultures, whereby interaction of human and horse creates 'patterns' of both joined and separate encounters (Haraway 2008: 110). It is through these daily interactions, that I will demonstrate the creation of the actors' identities.

In chapter 8: the racecourse, the 'liminal world' described in both Kate Fox's and Koenraad Kuiper's ethnographic analysis of the race-day, is demonstrated within the Canterbury region (Fox 2005) (Kuiper 2009). This 'other world' where racing participants share in the specific norms and values of thoroughbred racing, forms a background for the process that is taking place; the actual race. One of the interesting findings of this research is that stratification at the racecourse is noted largely with reference to the horse; those who are allowed to touch the horse (primary participants) and those who are not allowed to touch the horse (general public). For the purposes of this thesis, primary participants have been categorised to include trainers, stable-hands, jockeys and jockey apprentices. Supplementary participants are noted in the form of veterinarians, racing officials and owners, arguing that each individual participant is essential in the function of getting the horse to perform in a race. The race-goers or punters are categorized as additional participants as their presence is not mandatory in the functioning of the race-day, they are not included within the racing network or community and most importantly, they are not allowed to touch the horse. Despite prohibitions on 'touching' the horse, many punters still come to the track rather than using an off-course TAB, demonstrating what DeMello identifies as a human need to observe the horses despite being unable to physically touch them (2007:89). In this chapter, I draw on the isopraxis phenomenon or the rider-horse represented in the Centaur image, in order to explain why the jockey is distinguished as having a unique relationship with the horse (Haraway 2008:229, Thompson 2011). Koenraad Kuiper's (2009) three noteworthy components of race-meetings, namely competition, pageantry and risk-taking are used as a basis for analysing behavioural norms, ritual and participant motivation. As noted by Kate Fox, race-day rituals form an important part of identity for the participant groups, giving meaning to the roles that they perform (2005). One of the interesting findings was that mutualisms of 'natureculture' proliferate within an analysis of the race. Both jockey and trainer informants placed emphasis on the immediate, rather than a focus on the past and/or future, drawing a direct contrast to the participants' focus throughout the stud and auction sectors (as seen in chapters 5 and 6).

As we shall see in chapter 9, risk has been noted by various researchers within the thoroughbred racing industry with a strong emphasis being placed on the physical risk in working with these animals (Case 1991, Cassidy 2002, Fox 2005, Kuiper 2009). The racing industry is also associated with social, financial and emotional risk-taking. In her analysis of the British race-course, Kate Fox stresses the importance of this shared risk in strengthening the jockey group as a unit (2005: 32). This factor has been investigated in chapter 8: the racecourse, through an analysis of jockey and apprentice interaction with each other during the race. In this chapter, I have analysed risk largely in accordance with the anthropological approach associated with Mary Douglas and compared with modern approaches to risk in

ethnographic context (Douglas 1982, 1986 and 1992) (Caplan 2000). One of the interesting findings of this research is that the different participant groups within the racing industry choose to highlight some aspects of risk, while collectively downplaying others, demonstrating what Caplan notes as a means for identifying their “values, morality and politics,” (2000:24). It is through this focus that a sense of the human-horse relationship can be assessed, allowing for an analysis of participants’ motivation. In his examination of the race-day, Koenraad Kuiper identifies both physical and financial risk-taking; elements that are further investigated in this thesis in accordance with specific participant groups (2009). The important role of hierarchy in risk assessment as identified by Douglas is developed further in this chapter, with a focus on restrictions placed on the industry through government regulations (O.S.H.), as well as the guiding role of the Racing Integrity Board, specifically the stipendiary stewards (1992: 226). I demonstrate that through this focus on risk, these participants blur the natureculture boundary in that they are responsible for safeguarding the lives of both humans and horses. In this thesis, physical risk is noted throughout the different sectors, particularly for those who ride the horses. While owners may have the greatest social and financial risk, I have noted the possibility of emotional risk for all participants.

In chapter 10, I identify the role of women in an industry traditionally dominated by men. As we shall see in this chapter, the New Zealand scenario is somewhat unique. Women are commonly employed as stable hands; the South Island and Canterbury racing in particular have a significantly larger proportion of female jockeys than other parts of the world. Possible causes of this are identified, based on the work of New Zealand Sociologist, Martin Tollich, who has focused largely on the changing situation of apprentice jockeys in respect to the disintegration of the racing industry as an institution, as well as the ‘feminization of the New Zealand jockey profession’ (1995, 1996). In this chapter, I investigate the particular motivation of female participants in the Canterbury industry, drawing also on the work of American sociologist Elizabeth Larsen, who identifies the important role of trainer’s wives within the racing industry (2006). The role of gendered partnerships, specifically the contribution of women within the training sector, is examined with a strong emphasis on their connection with the horse and the racing lifestyle as a determining element of success. Drawing on the research of sociologist Janet Finch, I examine the structuring of women’s lives and the constraints imposed upon them due to their husbands’ employment within the racing industry (1983). This includes the blurring of boundaries between home and work, since specific participants in the racing industry, namely breeders, will work and live on the same property.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Speaking 'racehorse' is a slightly different dialect to the language of 'horse' itself and entails immersion into the breeding world of the thoroughbred, with the ability to string off reams of pedigrees and familial achievements when speaking about one particular horse.

Extract from fieldwork journal, 2011

2.1 Introduction

Evans-Pritchard claimed that through the particular nature of anthropological fieldwork, the anthropologist can discover the essence of what can never be fully explained to them, and what remains unperceivable to the layman (Lewis 1991:365). Fieldwork and the process of participant observation are the foundation of the ethnographic process, but their significance is supported by a number of other methods and procedures, such as the literature review and informal questioning. In her ethnographies of the British and American thoroughbred racing industries, Rebecca Cassidy describes her 'entry' into the field, placing the emphasis on her own personal background and the manner in which this shaped her research processes (2002, 2007). This aspect features prominently in my own research with the particular nature of the New Zealand racing industry shaping the manner in which I conducted my fieldwork. Racing is highly competitive, with social and financial gain to be made from the horses that achieve. This factor has emphasised the importance of ethical considerations and subsequently reflects upon the methods and practices used in my research.

2.2 Role of the ethnographer

Emerson (1995: 1) establishes the role of the anthropologist as a first-hand participant in a culture foreign to their own, with the purpose of producing ethnographic data based upon that participation. I found that having a basic background with horses is essential in the field of racing research in that being able to communicate confidently about horses and thoroughbreds in particular facilitates acceptance by informants by positioning the researcher as authentic and knowledgeable about horses. Rebecca Cassidy refers to this essential element as being able to "talk horse" (2002a: 20). In addition to this requirement, my role in caring for a twenty-year old thoroughbred, Rocket Red, has proved useful in that he was bred, sold and raced locally and my claim on him has been an advantage in itself as an 'ice-breaker' (See Illustration 4). In this respect, my role as thoroughbred enthusiast has enabled greater acceptance for my role as ethnographer.

The majority of participants in the New Zealand racing industry are female. This features greatly in the data obtained in that the number of female informants outnumbers the males. This suggests that particular emphases of the research and data elicited, is due both to the gender of informants as well as my female gender. Following on the lead of sociologist Elizabeth Larsen, who focussed on trainers' wives in the American harness racing industry, my role as a female ethnographer included questioning whether the lived experiences of the participants' wives added insight into the nature of their husbands' relations with other participants (both human and horse) (2006). This was evident in a number of cases in my project; for example when a trainer was asked what his wife's role was he initially stated that she took care of the paperwork for the business; however when observing at the stables, I noted that she also works as a stable-hand, assistant trainer and exercise rider. In doing participant observation, she proved to be an invaluable informant.

2.3 Conducting ethnography at 'home'

As the emphasis in anthropology extends on globalisation and multi-sited ethnography, construction of the ethnographic 'field' becomes of particular interest to anthropologists. The traditional notion of the bounded field-site challenges the legitimacy of an ethnography that is conducted both 'at home' and 'away', leading to a strong emphasis on methodology (Caputo 2000: 23). Amit draws attention to the fact that the anthropologist plays an integral role in defining the boundaries of their field-site (2000:14). The racing industry in Canterbury, by its very nature is multi-sited; many of the participants are transitory, conducting their work in a number of different locations throughout the South Island and focussing on important events that are 'away' (such as the Karaka sales in Auckland). Due to this feature, the anthropologist must practice what Marcus terms as "mobile ethnography" (1995:96). This questioning of the boundaries of the field-site is balanced by the idea that the ethnographer cannot achieve a holistic depiction (Ibid: 99). This aspect features prominently in my research, since a complete representation of the movements of the Canterbury racing participants was logistically too great for the scope of this thesis. While this may seem to border on what Candea criticises as a weakness of the multi-sited model in that it lacks concise method of definition and collection, the nature of snowballing techniques used in obtaining informants led to the natural selection of participants from various parts of the region (2007:169). In following participants up to the auctions on the North Island, I discovered that I had no control over limiting the field-site to Canterbury alone, and a more unrestricted approach was required (Candea 2007:171,172).

Practicing ethnography in my home town environment has created a different scenario to the traditional 'field', in that life continued as normal around the fieldwork.

As anthropologist Irina Culic found in her ethnography of Romanian immigrants (like herself) in a specific region of Canada, the actual process of beginning fieldwork began at the point of choosing her particular topic, and the 'field' was never actually left behind at the end (2010:198, 201). Although constantly surrounded by my 'field' and being an equine and thoroughbred racing enthusiast, unlike Culic, I was not a member of the racing community that I was researching.



Illustration 2: Rocket Red (by Red Tempo out of Stylish Living), affectionately known as Mason, has provided as a valuable research participant.

This made a significant difference in terms of not having easy access to informants; although I was able to make a few contacts through acquaintances, I was nevertheless faced with the familiar traditional problems of finding informants and establishing credibility with unknown participants.

2.4 Ethics

Ethical approval for this research was given by the University of Canterbury Human-Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct the research was initially gained from the Chief Executive of the Canterbury-Marlborough-Westland Jockey Club, who gave me a press-pass in conjunction with authorization for research to be conducted in all

parts of Riccarton Park Racecourse. His assistance also proved invaluable in establishing contact with numerous participants in the industry. Gaining written informed consent is an important part of the fieldwork process. Participants were also reassured of their anonymity, the use of pseudonyms and their right to abstain from answering particular questions as well as the right to request the removal of any of their information offered. Horse-racing is a highly visible occupation; participants are fully aware that they are the focus of media and public attention both at the race course and at certain other public occasions such as the Karaka auctions. In this respect, a few participants have stated that they were prepared to waive their anonymity; however the use of pseudonyms and the altering of identifying information have been deemed ethically necessary. Permission was gained from both New Zealand Bloodstock (in order to take photographs at the Karaka sales), as well as at Cambridge Stud (see Addendum).

The use of photographs raises the question not only of ethics but also of authenticity, in that the context, representation and actor-awareness of being photographed all influence the meaning of the cultural situation captured (Banks 2001: 117). In a public sphere like horse-racing, participants are very conscious of media and public attention, although they do not 'pose' for cameras until after their job is done. This is depicted in a conversation with apprentice jockey, Jessica:

"You forget about everyone around, forget that you're on T.V. I rode in one of the Cup days and there were all those thousands of people, but no; they were nowhere near my mind."

The major participants (jockeys, trainers and stable hands), know that they have the TAB/Trackside cameras on them constantly while in the birdcage and main viewing areas, as well as the official photographer taking photos without them being aware of it. In this respect then, participants were also often unaware of the fact that the ethnographer was photographing them. However other photos taken at stud-farms, for example, saw deliberate posing of the participants with their horses, establishing a context different to those at the racecourse.

2.5 Methods

2.5.1 Participant observation

This method allows the ethnographer to enter into the lives of the participants, through joining in their daily activities and enabling acceptance of their presence, so that a more accurate picture of their lives can be elicited (Bernard 1994: 136). Anthropologists have long focussed on the centrality of participant observation over technically-removed approaches such as structured interviewing and this has led to its adoption across a wide range of associated disciplines (see Case: 1991).

Participant observation can effectively allow for inclusion of the ethnographer within a community. Since I was not living and working in a residential community but rather exploring participants within a network of activity (the assemblage), I was removed from my informants and it was a lot harder to get contacts. As with the traditional field-site, this necessitated following the participants and allowing them to direct the movement and location of information (Amit 2000: 2).

2.5.1.1 Theory

Participant observation remains the foremost tool for ethnographic research. When the researcher participates in certain daily activities, there is greater acceptance of their presence by the informants, reducing chances of informants behaving in a manner they deem acceptable to the observer (Bernard 1994:141). Being aware of particularities through participation also allows the researcher to formulate sensible questions, as well as gaining insights and giving authenticity to observations (Ibid: 141,142). The following entry from my fieldwork journal reflects this:

The apprentice jockey tutor encourages me to get on the sprung horse to try it out for myself. I climb on and immediately feel that the stirrups are far too short. I get the horse going and note after getting the rhythm, that it's not as easy as the apprentices made it look. I'm hoping that he won't ask me to drop the reins and ride just with my legs like the apprentices had to do. The apprentices are all looking out of the window at my efforts and smiling; I'm hoping that it has established my sincerity, and I find numerous willing participants to interview at the end of the session.

Living the life of a participant employed within the racing industry would have facilitated easier access to information in a more traditional role of ethnographer in a bounded field-site. However the New Zealand requirement for certification-based employment in the equine industry, as well as health and safety restrictions prevented large scale participant observation. This challenge to the traditional type of information gained through immersive participant observation in the bounded field-site removes the limitations set by rigid definitions and blurs the boundaries of micro and macro (Amit 2000:15). The nature of the relations in this network of participants suggests a different role for the ethnographer; it is strongly suspected that informants (such as owners), might not communicate certain information to a stable-hand, sometimes seen as the entry-level position. Similarly, being tied to or identified in a particular role might hinder effective participation by the ethnographer in daily functions, resulting in the elicitation of data that is no deeper than that observed by the general public (Clegg and Bailey 2008:1067). In light of this, the process of making contacts and 'name-dropping', being seen and being identified as legitimate have been important in the process of field work.

2.5.1.2 Participant observation in practice

The difficulties faced in conducting participant observation in the racing industry are largely connected with the high-risk nature of the business. The daily activities all surround the horse; due to its volatile nature, this can be unpredictable even to a seasoned horseman. The other major obstacle to participant observation in an industry that necessitates a certain amount of skill is the barriers constructed by legal requirements (due to OSH and ACC)⁴ in terms of registration required for every aspect of the industry. Even the stable-hands who muck out stables, groom horses and might have a fairly routine job if they are not exercise riders, need to do an accredited course on stable management in order to obtain their jobs. This is a legal requirement to allow the person to 'touch' the horses. Such knowledge might be deeply embedded in those who have been around horses all their lives, but they must still get the 'piece of paper'. Reflecting on Health and Safety considerations, I have been extremely conscious of getting out of the way as people try to do their jobs around the horse. At times I have even felt awkward asking to observe, as I suspected that my presence might hinder the smooth running of everyday activities. Horse people, I have found, are very eager to talk and accommodate me, but at times I have picked up a sense of hesitation to stop what they are doing to answer my question, as there is a strict adherence to time.

Limited participant observation was conducted at a few racing stables and stud farms, assisting exercise riders with a 'leg-up' and helping to carry food and water buckets to the horses. Sitting in the Stipendiary Stewards rooms on race day, watching television screens and looking for infringements gave valuable insights into the workings of the judicial aspect of the industry; areas usually out of sight and access to the general public. 'Socialising'⁵ the horses at three different stud farms, enabled me to ask specific questions of the participants, as well as demonstrating genuine interest in the research topic, facilitating greater acceptance and authenticity. Various race meetings were attended, practicing participant observation as a race-goer. Being seen in the general public areas at these meetings enabled acceptance by a few 'regular' participants, who were willing to offer betting tips and information on different industry participants. An invitation to attend a race meeting as the guest of a member of the Jockey Club provided valuable insights into the races from the perspective of an owner.

Contacts were made with a number of informants using snowball techniques to open up further avenues of participant observation. Similarly, observing one industry

⁴ Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992) and the Accident Compensation Corporation (government organisation which controls the Accident Compensation Act 2001).

⁵The process of getting horses used to the presence of humans.

participant at work at the races facilitated a visit and introduction to staff at the starting gates, as well as connections made with stable hands, trainers and stipendiary stewards in the back stable area. Participant observation was also conducted at the South Island Two Year Old and Mixed Bloodstock sale in Christchurch (2011), as well as during two days of the New Zealand Bloodstock National Yearling Sales at Karaka, Auckland (2012). This fieldwork entailed walking the different stable-lots, looking at the horses and reading their individual breeding sheets attached next to the stable doors. Interaction with stable hands by asking pertinent questions of the horse's breeding, facilitated the perception of belonging.

I also attended a few sessions of the Southern Regional Jockey Apprentice School at Riccarton Park, sitting in the classroom and both reading the module workbooks as well as listening to the questions and answers given. We watched recordings of recent race meetings, assessing potential problems as well as race riding strategy with guidance from a stipendiary steward tutor. I was given the opportunity to ride the sprung horse, 'Pretty Pony' (see illustration 3), in order to practice techniques for sitting correctly and motivating the horse.

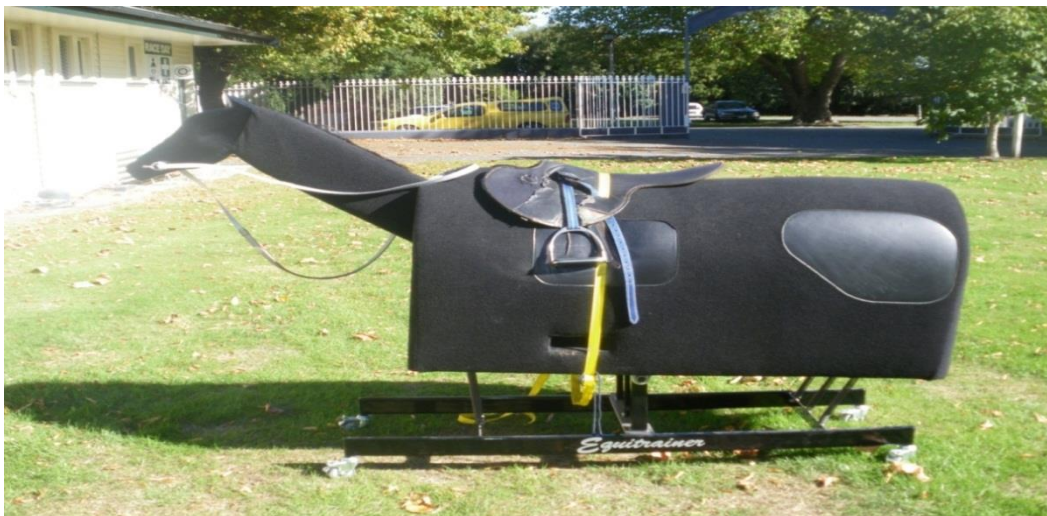


Illustration 3: 'Pretty Pony', the sprung training horse used by apprentice jockeys to practice correct riding techniques.

2.5.2 Observation

Observation made up a large proportion of this research. I attended many race meetings over the period of eighteen months, watching the movements of participants, their interaction with each other and the rituals and norms which they adhered to. In this manner, observation was used to provide an important basis for participant observation in the form of establishing my role of anthropologist as data-gatherer (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983:93, 94). My identity as a researcher, legitimately present yet distinctly non-native, was reinforced by constant note-taking (Sanjek 1990:22).

In terms of participant groups that I could not actively participate in due to professional requirements, such as the veterinarians, jockeys, farriers and photo-finish technicians, observation proved invaluable for gaining insight and establishing questions that could later be asked. I spent a race meeting observing the official veterinarians at work, both in the swabbing boxes (testing for illegal substances), and following the horses from the parade ring to the start of the race (where their 'form' is assessed by the veterinarian as a safe-guard against serious risk of injury; see chapter 9: Risk). Observation of the jockeys, specifically their interaction with the trainer and stable hands in the birdcage, supported Cassidy and Fox's views of the importance of ritualised communication before the race (as will be discussed further in chapter 8: The racecourse) (Cassidy 2002b) (Fox 2005). In particular, observing the interaction between the trainer, jockey and horse, led to questions that could be asked of these participants in relation to their roles as primary participants during the race ritual. A few early mornings were spent between the racing stables and the Jockey Club official overseeing training at Riccarton Park, enabling the identification of behavioural norms. I also observed the interaction of participants at the starting gates (an area usually devoid of the general public yet partially accessible to them), both at Riccarton Park and Motukarara racecourses⁶, an important part of the race ritual. It has also been fortunate that such extensive live coverage of race meetings is broadcast by TAB and Trackside T.V. channels, enabling the observation of many events that I was unable to attend. One particular occasion allowed a view of the exchange between jockey and stable hand after the horse kicked out at the public, from an angle inaccessible to race-goers.

2.5.3 Interviewing

2.5.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

The nature of the anthropological interview that sets it apart from any other typical interview, is the fact that informants respond to appropriate questions that have been predisposed by information gathered by the ethnographer, rather than arbitrary questions purely of the interviewer's making (Ellen 1984:225). In this respect, observation conducted at race meetings prior to contacts being made, proved invaluable in the formulation of relevant questions. These observations were made in conjunction with investigating issues raised through the literature search and subsequent formulation of further questions. This included observation of the network of interaction at the training facilities at Riccarton Park and at individual race meetings. In this field where a fairly rigid time schedule is followed, semi-structured interviews were crucial as a means of establishing contact with primary informants in that they enabled the participant to agree to a time that suited their busy schedule

⁶ Riccarton Park is the main thoroughbred racecourse for the Canterbury region and is located on the outskirts of Christchurch City. Motukarara is a small regional racecourse shared by both harness racing and gallops, located on the Banks Peninsula 30km from Christchurch.

and also allowed for the time to explain ethical aspects of the research and gain written informed consent. These opportunities were also subsequently used to set further dates for observation and participant observation, as well as establishing contacts through a snowball technique.

Ellen points to the fact that interviews are not a means whereby the anthropologist records facts, but rather a means to explore cultural meaning (1984:223). In this respect, informants were all asked for their opinion as to which participant in the industry has the strongest bond with the horse. The answers gave an insight into different opinions about the industry and work input of individual participant groups, as well as perceptions of the emotional attachment of participants with their horses.

2.5.3.2 Unstructured and informal interviews

Due to the nature of participant observation, unstructured and informal interviewing is widely used in the collection of data. This enables questions to be asked of particular proceedings as they unfold, based both on the observations of the ethnographer as well as information offered by the participants. Unstructured and informal interviewing was used largely during my fieldwork, where it was useful as a form of making conversation during participant observation as well as gaining insight into the workings of the industry. This is noted on one particular occasion, while visiting the broodmares at a stud-farm, the breeder pointed to a few trees and mentioned that they marked the graves of broodmares and foals. Further information on the aspect of emotional attachment to the horses was gained through questions being asked with reference to the graves.

2.5.4 Snowball sampling

This technique entails requesting access to associates as potential research participants, from each informant that the researcher comes into contact with. This non-probability form of sampling has the negative connotation of lacking true or full representation of the group being studied (Bernard 1994: 74). However, within a specific community, adequate representation can be maintained by gaining contacts through recommendations from representatives of that group (Ibid: 97). In the relatively small community of the Canterbury thoroughbred racing industry, snowball sampling provided essential in gaining access to informants, specifically due to the multi-sited nature of the field.

2.6 Fieldnotes

The person of the ethnographer, their academic preferences, personal opinions and outlook all colour the recounting of what they observe and understand in the field and how this is transcribed into field notes and later into the ethnography (Emerson 1995: xi). As such they are never ordinary, containing the ability to disturb (Spencer 1991:93, 94). Emerson draws attention to the fact that the role of the ethnographer is not to tell one side of the story in writing these subjective field notes; ethnography remains an attempt to reveal the multiplicity of facts lived by the participants (1995:3). Due to the involved nature of participant observation, formal note-taking was not always possible; scratch-notes or snatches of information were written down and used later to trigger memories for more formal note-taking (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 148). Interviews were conducted with the use of a recording device and later transcribed into notes, allowing for accurate recording of quotes and detail. In accordance with ethical considerations, the field notes were locked away after use and recordings deleted. This emphasis on quotes by the informants facilitates what Emerson highlights in that stories told by informants are important in order to illustrate a point of view, shaded by the narrator's conclusion of 'who' needs to be told 'what' (1995:117).

2.7 Summary

The process of fieldwork in the Canterbury thoroughbred racing industry required methods to be adapted to the specific nature of the field-site, in accordance with the strong emphasis required by health and safety regulations. Traditional anthropological methods of participant observation were used as far as possible, to gain insight into the nature of working within the different sectors of the industry, with detailed questions asked during both formal and informal interviews. Observation played an important role in the process of gaining insight into the workings of the industry and the nature of relationships and enabled the formulation of relevant questions for use at a later date. Informants were obtained through the use of snowball techniques and were also given the opportunity to contribute information that they deemed relevant. Given the topic of their relationship with their horses, informants in this region were most willing and enthusiastic participants, allowing me to gain valuable insight into their daily lives.

Chapter Three: Historical perspective

“How has training changed over the years?”

“There’s no simple way of doing it. I know a guy years ago, who used to chase his horse down the road with his car...”

Extract from interview with owner-trainer Henry, 2011.

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to locate horse-racing within its historical context, thereby enabling a better understanding of the participants, relationships, practices and traits of the modern system. Historical contextualization forms an important part of the process of qualitative research (Given 2008: 826). Anthropologist Michael Jackson suggests that the difficulty for the anthropologist in fully understanding a given situation lies in the fact that variables are affected by their social history (2008: xxv). A sense of history is important to the social actors themselves, in that a subconscious knowledge of the past is perpetuated in the habits and behaviour of the present (Ibid: 1, 2). A historical perspective brings into question whether motivational factors have changed and to what extent the current racing industry has modified with respect to social and economic motivation. In addition, the idea of deep and inherent affection for the horse as a constant factor is examined.

3.2 Early history

Horses have held a fascination for humankind for many centuries. Earliest evidence of this is found in the horse paintings at Lascaux, Chauvet and Niaux caves in southern France dating around 20 000 B.C. (Bradshaw foundation: 2011). On record, the earliest horse-racing as an organized past-time can be traced back to the Greek Olympics in the era 700-40 BC (Encyclopedia Britannica Website: 2011). Historian Sandra Swart states that a history of the human world is one which horses were forced to help make (2010:243). Whether the horses who participated in the formation of racing as an important cultural, economic and social industry were ‘forced’ to race, is a debatable issue. Sociologist Audrey Wipper, in her research into the human-equine partnership, states that a common belief amongst horse people is that it takes happiness for a horse to compete well (2000: 52). This element is reflected throughout my research amongst the horse-people of the Canterbury racing industry. Similarly, Monty Roberts, one of the foremost authorities on ‘Natural Horsemanship’, identifies an important fact in the horse-flight continuum; the fact that not all horse-running is ‘flight’ (2000:11). Critics of racing have condemned the sport for harnessing the ‘flight’ instinct, but according to Roberts, natural instinct to train and maintain fitness levels necessitates playing and racing with peers (Ibid). In this

respect then, the thoroughbred itself is a cultural trait, selectively bred over the past few centuries as the primary social actor in the racing industry, yet a willing partner with humans.

3.3 History of the thoroughbred breed

Although it took place in many different forms, it is probable that the basis of modern thoroughbred racing can be traced back to the reign of James I and it was during this time that horse-racing became entrenched within British culture (Day 1950: 55). Henry VIII was responsible for posting a number of laws relating to racing which established the association of stallion ownership with the titled gentry (Ibid).

Breeding farms aimed specifically towards horses for racing purposes, were already in existence during the seventeenth century, however the move towards inclusion of imported Arab bloodlines had started. The three 'fathers' of the thoroughbred breed formed part of this group; namely the Byerley Turk, the Godolphin Arabian and the Darley Arabian (Walker 2008: 72, 73). Rebecca Cassidy claims that the purity of these three bloodlines in themselves were suspect, an irony in the fact that the thoroughbred pedigree is claimed to be 'pure' (2007: 11). The early breeders of the thoroughbred are therefore noted as having a good 'eye' for type, selecting sires with notable characteristics such as speed and the ability to pass on good characteristics; an important element throughout the history of thoroughbred breeding. Cassidy also points to an important omission in the history books; that of the identities of the base mares used to promulgate this breed (2002a: 163). The names of the 3 base stallions have become inscribed in horse history, akin to the likes of an "Equine Adam, Noah and William the Conqueror" (Ibid). However the mares' names were not noted due to popular thinking at the time; that they diluted the perfection of the male strain. This train of thought continued through the centuries until fairly recently; the concept of male-inheritance was perpetuated by the social norm of primogeniture and masculinity.

An important milestone in establishing the thoroughbred breed came through the creation of the stud book; intended initially to record ages of the horses, it gradually came to reflect pedigree (Cassidy 2007:28). An influential factor which emerged with the 'perfecting' of this breed was in the historical conjunction with Britain's colonial expansion, the social stratification of British society at the time, and the strong ethnic identity associated with 'being British'. Anthropomorphic and nationalistic tendencies were duplicated onto their creation of the thoroughbred, in that it became a 'British' horse. This can be seen in the move to close the studbook, as well as the rejection of notions that the breed had been perfected due to imported strains; the excellence of the thoroughbred breed was claimed due to 'English' horses (Cassidy 2007: 12).

The high cost of 'pure' bloodlines and breeding of the thoroughbred, led to its association with nobility and the elite in society. Similarly, the high value placed on self- presentation by such social groups became entrenched in horse culture (Walker 2008: 98). This element is maintained on the race day with a strong emphasis on appropriate dress for different participant groups. Officials such as the stipendiary stewards are expected to dress in suits, jockeys are dressed neatly in their 'silks', and owners tend to dress smartly, while stable hands may choose to wear what they wish (personal observations at various race meetings: 2011). This social norm for appearance extended to the thoroughbred, not only in terms of the bloodline exclusivity and 'nobility' claimed for the breed, but also in terms of the horse's appearance. Preserved in Anna Sewell's 'Black Beauty', an anthropomorphic expression on the lives of horses during the 1800's, the appearance of the horse became a reflection of the social class and appearance of the owner and those associated with him/her.⁷ This emphasis on the horse's appearance continues in racing today; horses are always groomed to perfection, occasionally with fashionable patterns clipped on their rump and tack always well-polished despite 'turn-out' prizes for horse appearance being fairly uncommon⁸ (Personal observations at the race track: 2011).

Rebecca Cassidy notes that slaves were used as jockeys in early American racing (2007:13). This fact in conjunction with the use of orphans or young lower class boys (with no other prospects), in England suggests the use of those whose lives had little value under the traditional social class systems of the time. Perhaps this was an inherent address towards the risky nature and high danger of the jockey occupation.

3.4 The New Zealand Thoroughbred

3.4.1 Early History

The first recorded horses were brought to New Zealand in 1814 from New South Wales Australia, by the missionary Samuel Marsden (Grant 2001: 11). The location of the first official race is a much debated topic, due to the casual and unstructured nature of early race meetings. Grant claims the first structured race on record was held at Kororeaka on the North Island in 1835 (Ibid). However, in his history of the Canterbury Jockey Club, journalist David McCarthy supports Nelson as the strongest claim for the first race (2004:1). The first thoroughbred was imported from Sydney, Australia in 1840 (Taylor 2002: 9). Mincham reiterates the anthropomorphism apparent in the attitude of the upper classes of the early New Zealand colonists towards preferred horses (2011:10). An imported English thoroughbred was

⁷ This can be seen especially with reference to the bearing reign, fashionable at the time and considered an essential piece of tack to Lady W--, who would not allow her horses to be seen in public without it (Sewell 1978: 35, 36).

⁸ The appearance of the racehorse is contrasted with the typical part-bred or "mongrel" 'working' horse, which was generally covered in mud and long-haired (Mincham 2011: 10).

admired, whereas contempt was shown for the ‘mongrels’ seen around the countryside. The British equestrian tradition continued in the colony and made an impression on local Maoris, whose own horsemanship ethic developed on the notions of value and concern for these animals (Ibid : 13,14). A preoccupation and kinship towards stallions can be traced back to early origins, with the example of a newspaper death notice reflecting that of a human (The Star 1904:3).⁹

Christchurch horse-racing dates back to 1851, with an anniversary meeting at Hagley Park. An accumulated purse of fifteen pounds attracted a field sufficient for four races (McBride 1990:106). By 1854, the popularity of this pastime ensured the formation of the Jockey Club, who found their permanent home in Upper Riccarton in 1855 (Ibid). 1875 was a significant year in that it saw the permanent location of the Grand National Steeplechase at Riccarton Park (McBride 1990: 107). In the same year, the Christchurch Hunt Club was formed; an organisation that has long had a close association with the Canterbury racing community. The basis for forming the club lay in the social and economic conditions of the time, with the motivation of encouraging strong equine breeding also an element (Popple 1953: 163). Fox hunting in England was traditionally the pastime of the elite, or those wealthy enough to afford well-bred horses. Of relevance to the social and economic ties with this recreational activity, is the fact that thoroughbreds lend themselves to such sports. They are bred for speed, height and subsequent jumping ability, in comparison to harness racing which breeds a heavier-set, standard-bred horse for its driving abilities restricted to a trotting speed.

3.4.1.1 Social and moral influences

The multitude of racetracks that existed in the smaller towns was associated with the strongly emerging sense of community and progress amongst the colonists (Mincham 2011:31). The popularity of these rural race-meetings, especially in Hororata, can be seen in a proposal by the Glentunnel school committee to close the school for the annual race day in 1891 (Wilson 1949:117).

The latter part of the nineteenth century saw much social and moral-based debate within Canterbury society, with a strong criticism from some Protestant churches of the vices of horse-racing. The Rev. W Elmslie gave a lecture in 1876 on the ‘chinks’ in the social system, in which he separated the vices of gambling and horse-racing in general and called for a boycott of the racecourse by respectable ladies and modern society (The Star 1876: 2). However, the strong equestrian culture entrenched

⁹ The article is titled, ‘Death of Russley’ and gives the breeding of the stallion, an overview of his achievements on the track and in his breeding career.

amongst the colonists saw others claiming that the virtues of the horse gave dignity to mankind. The usefulness of the equine breed was estimated so high, that they were claimed to be "...something more than a mere servant – an ignoble creature," who was also, "...an intelligent companion, a valuable servant and a true friend." (The Star 1879: 2).¹⁰ Racing was commonly acknowledged as a setting for trickery and vice, and calls for reform were numerous, but the lure of racing addiction existed in conjunction with moral ideals opposing this pastime (The Star 1889: 3). This is noted with the publication of "A small boy's essay" in the Star newspaper, where the racetrack is described as a setting for "...drunkenness, profanity and vice," and "Jockeys are fed on gin from childhood, to stop their growth," but importance is still attributed to the forthcoming running of the St Leger, in which his father has a bet (The Star 1885:3). At the same time, George Stead, an influential member of the Canterbury Jockey Club called for a revision of the rules of racing, to include regulation and punishment of jockeys (The Star 1885: 4). It is important to note, however, that the authorities also recognised the need to protect such participants, especially the jockey, whom was noted as participating in such a high-risk occupation (The Star 1898: 2). Attempts were made by the racing clubs around New Zealand to police themselves in an effort to improve their image. Of note is the existence of a racing community ethic, with threat of exclusion from the community used in this manner. The "...undesirable mimicry of sport, [and that] all concerned in it are by the very act disqualified from owning, riding or training racehorses under our rules," (The Star 1909: 3). At that time, most owners also trained their own horses, with the only public trainer on record, Mr F.W. Devon noted for his expectation of owners needing to groom and ride their horses themselves (The Star 1897: 4).

In his history of the Canterbury Jockey Club, David McCarthy claims that only the wealthy colonists were of means to belong to the Jockey Club in the early days, with the cost being exceptionally high in relation to salaries at the time (2004:12).

3.4 1.2 Effects of the emergent harness-racing industry

The emergence of harness racing as a more popular pastime than the gallops and thoroughbred breeding in this region can be traced back to both social and economic aspects of the colony towards the end of the nineteenth century. While calls for breeding a more 'pure' thoroughbred led to only the wealthier classes being able to import expensive bloodlines from overseas, harness racing was conducted with 'ponies' of a general utility and accessible to the majority of the population. Grant emphasises the social element in his claim that thoroughbred racing has always been more glamorous, originating with the rural elite, while harness racing was tied

¹⁰ The Ashburton Guardian (1892) tells of indignance that a display of the famous racehorse Traducer has been erected incorrectly, placing his hind hooves in the position of the fore hooves and vice versa, reflective of the sentiment felt towards such horses at the time.

to the middle-class suburbanites (2001:127).¹¹ Despite the ownership by some of both types of racehorse, ill feeling towards other forms of racing at the time was also noted, with examples such as the thoroughbred trainer Larry Markey who abhorred trotters on the basis of their lack of pedigree. He was noted for claiming that all his animals were thoroughbred, including his roosters and donkey (Popple 1953:162). Despite these sentiments, breeding of 'pure' thoroughbreds remained an ideal, with some bloodlines imported from Australia noted as being "thoroughbred, or very nearly so" (The Star 1897: 4).

Towards the turn of the century, harness racing became more established and organised with the prime location of Addington raceway. The appeal of racehorse ownership had always been high and now became more financially attainable through harness racing, as the family or business horse worked in everyday colonial life, could be geared up to race on the weekend without the heavy financial outlay or elitist restrictions (McCarthy 2004: 85).

3.4.2 Twentieth century changes

3.4.2.1 Social and financial influences

The Protestant-led anti-gambling lobbyists continued their movement through the early part of the new century, gaining popularity with the middle classes and culminating in government legislation in 1910 banning bookies (Grant 2001: 42). In her history of the horse in New Zealand, Carolyn Mincham claims that the legislation over the years that banned bookmakers and off-course gambling, ultimately led to the focus on horse-racing by oppositional groups (2011:161).

The appeal of racing for both its participants and spectators as a form of release from mundane life is particularly evident in the fact that racing during and after both world wars were boom times for the industry. In his history of the Canterbury Jockey Club, David McCarthy attributes this to the money available for gambling that would have been spent on luxury items then unavailable due to war restrictions. Similarly, the racetrack provided a source for spending money that needed to be laundered from black-market sales of such luxury items (Ibid: 150).

The use of stimulants such as Arsenic was commonplace in the early part of the twentieth century, found in a variety of remedies and concoctions. The danger in using such poisons was not realised or of great concern until around the 1950s

¹¹ Grant (Ibid) continues with a claim that standardbreds are usually calm, while thoroughbreds tend towards excitability. This is highly questionable on an individualised basis. Thoroughbreds are handled far more by humans and are far more compatible with equestrian sports for re-homing purposes. Many Standardbreds are not suitable for breaking to saddle; of twenty Standardbreds that are retired at a given time, only about two of those will be appropriate for re-homing (Personal communication with Standardbred breeder:2010). It is therefore doubtful that differing temperament of breeds is a factor in the popularity of one form of racing and especially breeding over the other.

(Grant 2001:72).¹² This aspect came to attention through the advent of 'swabbing' in 1955; ultimately leading racing into sensationalistic court-cases and media attention (McCarthy 2004:156).

3.4.2.2 Emotional attachment

Nationalistic tendencies towards thoroughbreds as a 'creation' of a particular country can be seen throughout the breed's history and most notably in New Zealand with the famous Phar-Lap. Born in Timaru, New Zealand, but sold and then raced in Australia, his rise to fame in the 1930s saw divergent claims on his 'belonging'. This culminated in a sharing of his remains to this day, between the two countries. Similarly, Sir Tristram was an Irish-bred horse, trained in France, whose racing achievement was made in America. He rose to international recognition as a New Zealand stallion, where he stood at Cambridge stud during the latter part of the twentieth century.

The emotional attachment or 'kinship' felt for specific horses was evident amongst some of the early breeders and owners. Harry Knight, who established his breeding programme at his farm 'Racecourse Hill' outside Darfield during the 1930s, had such ties with his stallion Limerick. A gravestone in honour of this horse was placed at the entrance to his farm, and is still in existence today.

3.4.2.3 The thoroughbred auction

The centralisation of the New Zealand auctions was a move made to accommodate the increased number of overseas buyers and the large growth of the breeding industry. Thoroughbreds had previously been sold at their place of residence by individual owners (Mincham 2011:168). This practice still continues, despite a strong emphasis on the numerous horse sales throughout the year, (personal communication with breeders: 2011). The national yearling sales started in 1926, a joint venture between Wright Stephenson and co. and Pyne Gould Guinness Ltd, the latter a Canterbury stock agent representing some of the wealthiest South Island farmers (Haworth 2007:63). These were later relocated to their present-day home at Karaka, south of Auckland, to a state of the art, purpose-built venue that houses New Zealand Bloodstock and can easily compete with international standards. This establishment, as well as the contribution of emergent breeders and top-class bloodlines, such as the partnership of Sir Patrick Hogan and his stallion, 'Sir Tristram', led to the vast increase in values and international standing of New Zealand bloodstock from the 1980s (Mincham 2011:170). Carolyn Mincham describes the emergence of New Zealand racing in terms of the Arcadian dream; a

¹² The use of Arsenic has been recently attributed to the death of Phar-Lap. For many decades, accusations of poisoning were rife; such accusations are now seen to be accurate, but considered as a mistake of the times.

rags to riches advancement based on hard work and knowledgeable use of the plentiful resources available (Ibid:168,169). Sociologist Carol Case has used a similar analogy of the Horatio-Alger myth (The 'American dream'), in terms of her study of the American thoroughbred racing industry (1991: 12). This draws relevance on the similarity of current American and New Zealand racing in terms of their assimilation of the British tradition of thoroughbred horse racing. Both cultures have assimilated aspects of the British tradition, but have had to develop their own strong sense of origin for their industries. Sir Patrick Hogan's story emulates this ideal and establishes his stallion, Sir Tristram as an icon for breeders throughout the country. The emotional attachment of owners and breeders with specific horses is also continued in their example of the statue and gravestone to Sir Tristram's memory (See illustration 1, p.17 and illustration 2, p.18).

3.4.2.4 The jockey profession

The participant category of the jockey traditionally combined the roles of owner and rider, until the issue of weight became a determining factor for speed. Jockeys became drawn from the ranks of small boys who dropped out of school, and either had a love of horses or were encouraged through their physical stature. Apprentices lived with their patron trainer; a tough existence filled with hard work and many sacrifices (Grant 2001: 53).¹³ Jockeys had few rights, with the threat of losing their fee and future rides as well as a verbal lashing from an unhappy owner or trainer commonplace. For the trainer and his wife, the occupation became all-encompassing with the care of apprentices likened to fostering (personal communication with trainer's wife, 2012). The high risk factor for the participants was recognised as early as 1917, with the introduction of a motorised ambulance (McCarthy 2004:94). The unacceptable working conditions, as well as the social trend for the time, led to the formation of a Jockey's union in 1919 (Grant 2001: 54).

3.4.2.5 Women in thoroughbred racing

Traditionally women have had much prejudice to overcome before being accepted into this historically male-orientated and governed industry. Elaine Walker ascribes this to the predominant social morals of the time, in that it took the societal acceptance of women riding astride in the saddle at the end of the nineteenth century, for men to share the riding domain (2008:112). However, Charles II had established the Newmarket Town Plate allowing female riders to compete against males; a concept that was dropped and forgotten for a few centuries. Women in New Zealand were not disqualified from breeding and owning thoroughbreds, but faced

¹³ Grant continues to tell of an old wives' method used by a jockey at the turn of the twentieth century; in order to make his weight, he had buried himself in manure, starving himself for as long as physically manageable (Ibid).

restrictions on training and riding them in races (Mountier 1993:5). Women in New Zealand were initially denied trainers licences, despite a large number of women pre-training their family horses before final race-preparation was handed to a professional. Those who owned their horses were permitted a trainer's license for those horses; the first woman to obtain a license to train professionally obtained this almost through default in 1924, as her request was so unexpected of a woman (Mountier 1993:28, 29). Female physical traits were long used as a justification for exclusion, even after women started to establish their equality; these ranged from the 'roundedness' of their thighs and the perceived tendency towards carelessness, to the more recent notion that they lacked the physical strength needed to control the horse (Ibid: 114,115).¹⁴ It was only in the 1950s that women started to be accepted as stable hands. Gradually, they made their way into the profession of exercise riders and in 1978 after the issue had become a civil rights campaign, women started out in the jockey profession (Grant 2001:84). Despite much prejudice in the early years, the number of female apprentice jockeys continued to grow.

3.4.2.6 Modern-day challenges

Over the past century, many of the small country racecourses that dotted the Canterbury landscape, have either fallen into disrepair or are now retained purely for training purposes, the clubs having joined with larger racecourses that could keep up with the challenging socio-economic demands of progress. One such example is the Hororata racecourse, which retained its use for both gallops and harness racing in the early part of the twentieth century. During the Second World War, the course was occupied by the army and used as a training facility (Brankin 1996:8, 9). Despite post-war directives from the district racing authorities preventing members from participating in the organisation of both gallops and harness-racing, the strong community spirit of this farming district overlooked such regulations. It was only in 1965, that economic and safety factors necessitated the thoroughbred club move their race-meeting to Riccarton Park (Ibid: 22).

As the twentieth century came to a close, horse-racing suffered a socio-economic blow with the popularisation of other forms of entertainment, as well as legalisation of alternative forms of gambling, including international opportunities available to the public from the comfort of their own home. A combined effort between harness racing and thoroughbred racing has seen the formation of the New Zealand Racing Board, a joint governing body which includes the interests of greyhound racing, in order to address these issues. The Canterbury participants in the racing industry have since liaised with each other for large events such as Cup Week, in order to

¹⁴ As recently as 2009, the mini-series 'Jockeys' documented the lives of a number of American jockeys working in Southern California. Jimmy 'the hat', a successful punter stated that few women become successful jockeys due to their lack of physical strength needed in controlling a racehorse (Series 1, episode 9).

jointly promote their sports to the public (Personal Communication with Jockey Club official 2011).



Illustration 4: The statue erected in memory of Sir Tristram

3.5 Summary

In terms of the categories of primary participants, an examination of the historical roles of the trainer, owner and jockey, demonstrates a distinct change over the past century from largely that of a breeder and horse-owner pursuing a hobby or sport, to a primarily distinct demarcation between categories of 'owner' and 'trainer' in modern times. The evolution of the role of jockey from the gentleman horse owner, to young boy and then to a professional sportsman is noted. The appearance of women as primary participants within the different sectors of the racing industry is of particular relevance within a historical context. Traditionally omitted from this pursuit, female participants have come to significance over the past forty years. Of particular interest is the distinct number of women participating in the New Zealand context, which contrasts with the evidence of modern horse-racing ethnographies conducted both in The United States and England¹⁵. An historical perspective on this study is relevant not only to demonstrate the socio-cultural changes that have taken place within the industry. Certain aspects suggest socio-cultural continuity. The high cost of stallions and the emphasis on bloodlines continues to be perpetuated in today's industry. Similarly, historical sources point to the element of kinship with distinct racehorses, as well as heredity of interest and occupation within the racing industry. A focus on an historical perspective enables the questioning of the nature of family participation in the racing industry as a tradition, an obligation, or a shared devotion to the Thoroughbred breed. The issue of domestication is of significance in terms of a

¹⁵ Rebecca Cassidy's ethnography in Newmarket, England and Kentucky, U.S.A., Kate Fox's study of British racecourse culture and Carol Case's ethnography of the American racing backstretch.

historical development of the thoroughbred breed. In the following chapter I draw on this current issue of debate in human-animal studies, reflecting on the three elements of motivation for human participants in the racing industry and the role this has played in domestication.



Illustration 5: Sir Tristram's gravestone. Of note is the personal message:

"Over the years you shaped many people's lives. You helped many dreams become reality. To us – you were the inspiration to become the best that we could, in a profession we love. We'll never forget you Paddy."

Chapter 4: Domestication and thoroughbreds

*“They do remember you and that’s why you’re more than just a caretaker, because they **are** part of your family and they know and recognise you.”*

Conversation with breeder Stacey, 2012.

4.1 Introduction

The thoroughbred is noted for significant human intervention in its breeding, as well as balancing the element of nature, through the strong emphasis that has been placed on ‘purity’, speed and competitiveness throughout its history. Contemporary breeding practices contribute to an on-going process of domestication through a highly selective method of breeding, which constitutes an important aspect of both intimate human-animal relations and human investment in the Canterbury racing industry. Breeders thoroughly analyse and select pedigrees to combine with their own horses, in order to elicit the ‘perfect’ combination of traits that they desire (an aspect which will be discussed further in the following chapter on breeding). In this chapter, I compare the humanist nature-culture binary, with ‘mutualism’ and Haraway’s posthumanist natureculture theory. In order to illustrate this comparison, I locate the thoroughbred on Elizabeth Lawrence’s continuum between nature and culture (locating types of horses), as well as the nature and nurture aspects of domestication (1985), in a critique which I aim to inform multispecies ethnography. I identify the naturalcultural history of domestication that produced the thoroughbred breed through a discussion of the domestication of thoroughbreds, including the ways in which its selected racing qualities also represent inbred weaknesses. I draw on both the negative consequences of human intervention for economic gain, namely the high physical break-down rate of thoroughbreds and the positive aspects evident in the Canterbury industry, namely continuation of natural elements (such as herd formation) in keeping these animals. Like Birke et al (2010) and Cassidy (2005), I question the use of current terminology defining human ‘ownership’ of the horse; looking at the relevance of opposing academic views on this terminology within the specific context of thoroughbred racing in Canterbury.

4.2 Theories on domestication

4.2.1 Mutualism and mutual determinism

The on-going challenge to adequately incorporate the biophysical environment into anthropological theories of society and culture are addressed by Tim Ingold’s work on dwelling, as well as posthumanist perspectives and multispecies ethnography, not to mention a long tradition of environmental and ecological anthropology. In his history of human-animal relations, Ingold claims that the area in which humans interact with each other on a social or cultural level is innately joined to that of the

interaction with their environment (2000:61). This supports the belief that human involvement with horses is governed by socio-cultural norms and these norms in turn are governed by the nature of horses. Mutualism is a key idea in multispecies ethnographies such as Fuentes's discussion of the mutual ecology of humans and macaques in Bali (2010), and humans and elephants in Hathaway's discussion of the way that certain Chinese landscapes are co-constituted by humans and elephants (2013). Baenninger also refers to the 'mutualism' evident between humans and horses (1995: 71). This is noticeable in thoroughbred racing and breeding on numerous levels, namely social and financial benefits for the human and a high standard of care for the horse. Despite the occasional negative press, the general industry opinion concedes that thoroughbreds are cared for at a high standard. As informant Andy, a jockey mentions:

"The horses are very well treated overall. They live in (bloody) five star hotels. They're sheltered, they're fed, and they're clothed. They get everything attended to. Pretty well looked after in general."

This high standard of care is contrasted to circus horses in 19th century USA. Susan Nance tells us: "With limited veterinary care (even such as it was in those days), equines were employed until exhausted at the age of four or five years or killed by disease. Thereafter owners disposed of them, if alive, either by sale or by euthanasia, or, if dead, wherever one could find markets for horse meat, leather, or hair" (2013: 8).

Beatson uses the term 'mutual determinism' as a major structuring concept in his theory of mapping human and animal relations (In Taylor & Signal 2011:21, 23). This two-way exchange sees the human world determined by animals, despite the role of humans as 'God' in the animal kingdom. He emphasises the role of animals in this exchange in that they "...set(s) the rule by which the social game is played" (Ibid: 24). This is particularly evident in the thoroughbred world, where the racehorse exerts a certain amount of influence in the shaping of their career; some horses will naturally assert themselves at the front of the herd (and win races), while others will naturally be submissive to the rest of the herd. Similarly, the stallion at stud can make his opinion known about the attractiveness of a mare, and some are known to refuse those that they dislike (Personal communication with breeders: 2012).

4.2.2 Natureculture versus nature and culture binaries

The notion of mutualism points towards a terminology that blurs the boundaries between nature and culture, rather than a dichotomy of opposites (Russell 2002: 286). Donna Haraway calls for the joint placing of both humans and animals, in order to understand that each becomes identified in the course of relating to each other

(2006:110). It is this patterning of heritage that stresses the shared history rather than the distinct demarcation of nature versus culture that has been traditionally associated with studies on domestication.

Social historian Sandra Swart, emphasises the equality of nature and nurture in the human-horse relationship; the aspect of nurture is reinforced by archaeologist Juliet Clutton-Brock in her claim that the suitability of the horse for domestication was guarded by its ability to remain tame through human contact (nurturing) (Swart 2010: 263) (Clutton-Brock 1994:23, 24). Species are domesticated by humans to suit human purposes, and are hence naturalcultural. The stallion is an example of 'natureculture' in that most stallions are naturally volatile and 'wild' and are therefore separated from others into their own paddock, however the 'tame' (or cultural) element is manipulated to facilitate breeding. The stallion is commonly understood by my informants as comprising the natural and the cultural through their recognition of coexisting wild and tame aspects. There are also examples of thoroughbred stallions that have the 'tame' element further nurtured by humans; one of my informants mentioned that he had originally ridden his stallion when he first got him, making him easier to handle. Juliet Clutton-Brock regards the human actors as elders in a shared human and animal society, where animals learn to relate accordingly to humans (Ibid: 29, 30). This aspect is clearly evident in the racing industry, where a network of elders and equines coexist. Equine actors are taught from a young age what is expected of them and how to behave appropriately. This is emphasised in practices such as socialising with foals; teaching them to accept human interventions such as wearing a halter, farrier work on their hooves, deworming and inoculations. Later interventions on colts and fillies include breaking them to saddle and teaching them to load into horse-trailers and starting gates, all of which form part of appropriate equine behaviour in racing society. The 'natural' qualities of the horse including bucking, kicking and bolting are reluctantly acknowledged by racing participants because they are part of the 'wild' element. In comparison, other equine disciplines (such as show-jumping and dressage) stress the 'culture' or 'tame' elements of equine behaviour. This suggests that although there is a shared equine culture, the racing community has its own distinct values and emphases.

Equine anthropologist Elizabeth Lawrence has identified a continuum linking the binaries of wild and tame in different types of horses, ranging from the feral Mustang at the 'wild' end, to the dressage horse at the 'tame' or 'culture' end of the continuum (1985:80). Through this analysis, she employs a specific scheme for understanding human intervention and behavioural forms in the full range of domesticated horses. In terms of Haraway's argument that characters are changed by interaction in blurring the human-animal boundary, the racing industry sees the foal enter into the

web of interaction as purely 'nature' before human contact gradually changes the horse into 'tame' (2006:110). Haraway's concept of 'becoming animal' defines the process whereby animals gain identity in the human world through the personalised social attachments they make, the unique and complicated ways in which they conduct themselves, perform tasks and live their everyday lives, neither changing completely nor originating due to human intervention, but becoming essential and organised into the daily lives of humans (Whatmore & Thorne 2000: 186). In this respect, the foal retains that element of 'wild' in that it must be handled regularly by humans in order to facilitate the 'tame', but a delicate balance is necessary on the part of the humans so that the foal is not over-socialised, rendering it too 'tame', or not knowing its place as an equine. Paul, a breeder highlights this aspect of foal socialisation:

"There's a foal I know of at another stud and it's going to be a nightmare. It wanders everywhere. It's like a dog."

Some informants also claim that the foals of notably tame mares are themselves easier to tame than foals of more difficult mares, suggesting an inherent tendency (Personal communication with breeders: 2011, 2012). The idea of the controlled racehorse on race day epitomises the 'tame', yet also embodies the 'wild' in that the specific human-horse interaction in the race calls for a transition to 'wild' at that particular time. In her ethnography of British race-goers, Kate Fox draws on this dichotomy of controlled domestication and instinctive flightiness during the race (2005:87). This particular capricious characteristic, in conjunction with the thoroughbreds temperamental personality and 'edge' are embraced by some punters, who believe that such horses have an advantage over those that remain calm and docile (personal communication with punters: 2011). The irony evident in this example is described by a breeder informant at the racetrack, who drew my attention to the flightiness of her horse just before a race. She claimed that her horses were well socialised and had completely different personalities at home or at the trainer's yard. Since her trainer has a small, rural establishment, her horses are comfortable in a more natural setting, displaying 'wild'-type behaviour in the 'cultural' setting of the racecourse. Since jockey informants all pointed to the necessity for keeping the horse calm before the race so that it does not lose precious energy, this suggests that the 'wild' horse *before* the race, might not be the best horse on which to gamble. Human handlers will draw on this 'wild and tame' duality, choosing one or the other in accordance with their requirements at any particular time. Locke's use of the Kaleidoscope metaphor to explain multiple meanings and variable emphases placed on elephants by their human handlers in Nepal can be adapted to this scenario of alternatively emphasized representations (2012). While the racehorse can display both 'wild' and 'tame' behaviour, its transition from one type to the other

is largely regulated by its surroundings or the demands and expectations of its human handlers, at given times.

My informants' way of thinking and talking about the domesticated status of horses is demonstrated in relation to their experiences of behavioural variation, both between different horses, and between the behaviour of the same horse at different times (under different circumstances). They emphasise the commonly shared belief that the 'wild' element of the horse remains unpredictable and can never be fully controlled. There is a common saying amongst horse people that: 'No horse is ever bomb-proof' with the more reliable horse being termed a 'schoolmaster' to allow for human tendencies of reliability but fallibility. Training stables will refer to a reliable older thoroughbred used for schooling the inexperienced jockey apprentices as the 'stable pony', which carries derogatory connotations of not being as spirited as the other horses, of being smaller in stature and of being safe enough for riding by children.¹⁶ These beliefs are important in acknowledging and dealing with the element of risk, prolific in the industry and discussed further in chapter 9 of this thesis.

The thoroughbred breeding sector largely makes use of the natural instinct of horses to form a herd. During the course of my fieldwork, it was most common to see herds of a few broodmares grouped together in a particular field, often with their respective foals at their side, or facilitating a shared 'nursery'. A few months after they are born, the foals will gradually be weaned from their mothers through human intervention; humans perform a task that otherwise occurs naturally (at a later stage inconvenient to human intentions), in order that the foal can adapt to its future career as a racehorse. There is however, a noticeable absence of the stallion, whose interaction with the mares is highly regulated and controlled by human caretakers.

¹⁶ The connotation of immaturity is also symbolised within the breeding sector with the use of a 'teaser'. These male ponies are quite distinctly recognisable in that they are much smaller than the thoroughbreds. A teaser will be a partially-gelded pony that is used both to check whether a mare is in season and also to prepare her for the stallion. Such practice is symbolic of the pony's implied sexual immaturity, with distinct connotations of value; the breeder would never allow a pony (of little financial value) to mate with a broodmare (of substantial financial value).



Illustration 6: The natural instinct of horses to form close bonds and to mutually groom each other is facilitated by their organisation into age-appropriate paddocks by their human caretakers.

Social hierarchy amongst horses is an inherent herd element that remains largely unchanged by human intervention. Budiansky notes the rank ordering of foals in the herd according to the status demanded by their mothers (1997:75). This natural practice is most noticeable at the stud farm and seen during participant observation:

We placed four feed bowls in the paddock, one for each mare and her foal, however it was not that simple and we had to constantly act as policemen. The alpha-mare and her foal would move to a different bowl, displacing that mare and her foal, which would in turn move on to another bowl, displacing another mare and foal that were deemed lower on the social ladder. My informant, Stacey, stated that this behaviour would continue without the presence of the mares.



Illustration 7: The hierarchy of the broodmare paddock at feeding time; foals learning their pecking order according to the status of their dams.

Contrary to the natureculture approach, a clear demarcation between nature and culture is established in Rebecca Cassidy's ethnography, 'The Sport of Kings'. Cassidy refers to the cultural concept of tidiness and cleanliness that is maintained by the racing industry, especially in the breeding sector (2002b: 20, 26). The removal of horse droppings and the restricted growth of winter coats through blanketing horses are examples she gives of cultural influences in this respect. Cassidy uses the idea of culture in control of nature in her example of human obsession with cleanliness through the removal of manure. However, the natureculture interaction within domestication is evident within this example; manure removal is an essential (cultural) practice to remove the possibility of worms and reduce the chance of inferior grasses from growing (both elements of nature introduced by human intervention). Since the horse in its natural environment is a forager that roams many kilometres daily in search of food, it goes against the natural environment to be subjected to large amounts of accumulated manure. Horses on stud farms and in racing stables are kept in secure, fenced paddocks, largely restricting their natural movement. Similarly, this build-up of manure can lead to the growth of inferior grasses. In the New Zealand industry with its milder climate, a more relaxed attitude is taken towards blanketing in that some stud farms do not stable or blanket their horses, and racehorses that are turned out for the winter might also be left to return

to a natural state with the growth of winter coats (personal communication with stud managers and trainer: 2011).

4.3 Consequences of domestication for the horses

Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin draw on the connection between domestication and resultant deterioration of the equine breed (2007:8). In his book "The nature of horses", Stephen Budiansky draws attention to the relatively recent emergence of the thoroughbred, clearly depicted in its neotenic tendencies, specifically the long, thin juvenile-type legs (1997:82). Human intervention in breeding thoroughbreds to a specific cultural prescription, has led to the development of flaws which would have been bred out through natural selection; for example they are plagued by fragile legs and weak hooves, leading to breakdowns. Breeders still attempt to create racing perfection through carefully selective breeding for culturally desirable traits. Budiansky refers to the inherent tendencies of the newly domesticated species to almost fall into line with human intentions, implying the arrogance of humankind in the whole domestication concept (Ibid: 7). The compliant nature of the horse facilitates racing (Ibid: 2). It is this willingness to race that humans have harnessed in the breeding of thoroughbreds, in conjunction with the inherent fear in horses that might compel them to run.

Budiansky highlights an essential element in the domestication issue of thoroughbreds and the influence of investment factors, in that tradition and financial input have steered the development of this breed (1997: 215). Socially 'popular' blood-types which have no guarantee for success have caused certain inferior traits to be bred in these horses. In this respect, it seems that who owns what and whoever is better at publicity, gains perpetuity for their horse's bloodline. However, the ability to race is still a highly independent variable. There are countless examples of 'cheap' thoroughbreds achieving at a high level, becoming worth many times more than they were initially bought for. On the other end of the scale, there are also plenty of examples of horses from expensive bloodlines that are never placed in a race. The consequences of non-performance can establish the horse as a commodity; traded for financial gain to other humans and sold on for other purposes.

Perhaps what is more important is a focus on the mutualism identified by Elizabeth Lawrence, that: "People transform the horse, but are also transformed by it." (1985:1987). Some retired thoroughbreds find their way into venues for equine therapy, which in itself combines the 'wild' and 'tame', in that nature is used to nurture or tame the 'wild' delinquent adolescent. The ability of the thoroughbred to transform human life is not purely on a socio-economic level, but also an emotional one. Spectators may be drawn to the racecourse as the cultural practice of racing is like a parallel world or an escape from the mundane practice of everyday life and

similarly racehorse ownership or working with these animals has the ability to transform human life beyond mere social and financial aspirations (aspects which will be discussed further in the following chapters).

4.4 Consequences of domestication for humans

Domestication was the likely result of combined human and animal evolution, with the demand initially on human adaptation in order to incorporate animals into their culture (DeMello 2007:68). Haraway draws attention to the concept of a 'co-evolution' of humans and animals with a focus on the role of humans in that relationship (2003: 12, 13). Through her definition of companion animals, the horse is included as an animal prepared to work as part of a team in cross-species events (Ibid: 14). In his research on human-elephant relations in Sri-Lanka, Lorimer identifies 'co-evolution' through shared histories, physical dispersal and shared development (2010:492). As with the elephant handlers, those who work daily with the thoroughbred: the breeders, trainers, stable-hands and jockeys (amongst others), are symbolic of this co-existence as co-evolution. A similarity can be drawn to the fragile system of co-habitation between human and elephants in Sri-Lanka with the delicate social and financial balance that controls the stability of the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds. These factors remain as a continued challenge to the survival of this particular breed. A great deal of domestication research draws attention to the human implications of domestication, in shaping culture and creating human identity (Baenninger 1995:69, Mullin 1999:216, Borneman 1988:48 and Latimer & Birke 2009:3). The cultures that have built up around the thoroughbred horse is deeply embedded with the social norms of its history, in that the breed was never intended for the masses, but rather the elite in society (see chapter 3 on the history of the thoroughbred). The use of thoroughbreds has played a distinct symbolic role in their expression of exclusivity; the supposedly 'best' bred horses commanding the highest price paid at auction and then demonstrated on the track through exclusive races. The very nature of this breed (the expenses of owning and caring for the thoroughbred), has recently brought the industry to a cross-road necessitating wider inclusion into ownership through syndication. While financial gain from racing might be the benefit of a select few, the social benefits are enjoyed by the general public. The situation of excess horses raises moral questions, especially for those humans involved in the industry who have an intimate connection and claim to love horses.

4.5 Conflicting terminology

Terminology used to define the relationship between human and horse is relevant to the discussion on horses as domesticates, since this thesis is concerned with the interspecies social relations involved. In their article on the role of caring for horses,

Linda Birke et al question the use of the term 'caretaker' to effectively encompass the relation between human and horse (2010: 345). The thoroughbred has considerable financial value and therefore their preferred term is that of 'guardian'. While many other companion animals have considerable financial value, this is not quite as much as the most prized horses can fetch. Rebecca Cassidy also footnotes the failure of the term 'caretaker' to adequately describe the human-horse relationship specifically within thoroughbred racing (2005:65). The relationship between humans and thoroughbred horses is a complex interplay between emotional attachment and socio-financial investment, generally irrelevant within other aspects of the interspecies relationship. Unlike other sectors of the equine industry (such as showing), racing is unique in that few 'owners' are also the daily 'caretakers' of their horses. While this terminology partially reflects the relationship of human and horse in most spheres of the racing industry it does not adequately define the nature of the relationship between horse and their financial caretaker. Everyday participants in the lives of the horses, namely trainers and breeders, stable hands, jockeys, track-riders, farriers and veterinarians, all demonstrate an intimate or 'care-taking' approach to the horse (through varying degrees). The trainer functions largely as a guardian in the interests of the horse, with the cross-over categories of owner-breeders and even owner-trainers necessitating more of a care-taking type role. The average owner will rarely so much as touch their horse, let alone take care of its daily needs (personal communication with racing participants: 2011, 2012). Donna Haraway claims that the use of terminology such as 'guardian' and 'ward' or 'owner' and 'property' entrenches the categorization of humans and animals as opposing poles (2008: 51). She calls for a makeover of terms that reflects the interconnectedness of human-animal existence and the need for neither to be dominant (Ibid: 82). In this respect, the 'partnership' emphasized by many of the participants in my research reflects a balanced contribution of both human and animal.

4.6 Summary

A focus on the issue of domestication with regard to the thoroughbred breed highlights the mutualism that exists between human participant and horse, as well as furthering the aim of demonstrating human social and financial investment. This mutualism reflects on the social aspects of ownership in that thoroughbred racehorses retain connotations of value and expense. Human intervention has had a significant role in shaping this breed, in that the so-called 'purity' has been a decisive factor fashioned by individual interests. It is this element of ownership associated with the thoroughbred that blurs the boundaries of nature and culture. Natureculture is evident through elements of wild and tame, with the unique character of the thoroughbred established in this context. The specific requirements of racing places a different emphasis on this nature of the thoroughbred as opposed to other equine sports, linking with notions of the breed as a manifestation of inalienable culture

(forever linked to their origin), as will be seen in the following chapter. Despite the fact of thoroughbred 'break-downs' due to genetic weaknesses in the legs and hooves, the positive elements are also noted, such as natural methods of keeping broodmares (somewhat maintaining natural herd formation). This focus also highlights the inadequacy of current terminology used in multispecies ethnography to describe the human-animal relationship, highlighting the unique nature of this study. These relationships will be explored further in chapters 5 and 7, in the assemblages of the breeding and training sectors. I focus further on the unique sense of identity given to the thoroughbred and the communities that have been built around the central focus of this particular breed.

Chapter 5: Horse racing – the cyclic character

“We have a Red-Robin for ‘Arnold’, in the stallion pit we have a corner for a steeplechaser. ‘Grandma’s’ got a tree over there in that paddock. We have another grave that we still have to put a tree over and fence around...Our son said we’re going to have too many trees, we won’t have enough space for the horses...”

Conversation with breeder Lisa, 2011.

5.1 Introduction

“The horse racing industry does not necessarily have a specific beginning. Although the life of a racehorse begins at a stud-farm, it is the economic success of both the sire and the dam on the racecourse, as well as successes by sibling colts and fillies which leads to their incorporation into the breeding sphere” (Spicer 1998: 6-7). In this respect, the career of the racehorse continues long after their usually short stint at the track, as either a broodmare or less frequently, a stallion, maintaining a cyclic course, whether successful or unsuccessful, until their retirement. Actor Network theory is an analytic approach, used to demonstrate the assemblages that are built between humans and animals (Emel & Urbanik 2010: 204). A.N.T. and the idea of assemblage originally derive from the post-structural thinkers Deleuze and Guattari. Marcus and Saka note that assemblage suggests; “a configuration of relationships among diverse sites and things” (2006:102). This relates not only to the emergence of unstable entities that are varied in nature, but also connects with Haraway’s natureculture in that animals obtain human-ordered identities in relation to the uses and institutions created around them by us. Assemblages in the racing industry are constituted by a concurrence of affects, technologies, bodies and events which include feelings towards the horses, daily routines and events such as the auctions and race days. In conjunction with this theory I draw on the approach of anthropologist Kirrilly Thompson; using a cyclical approach in analysing the bullfight as an event that is repeated time and again (2010:317). Her focus also draws attention to the performance of lateral relations, in order for relations to function (Ibid). These include the daily practice of exercise riding or training, veterinary attention given on a regular basis to the animals and even mundane practices of daily feeding and watering. In this respect, the racing industry can be analysed similarly to the ‘Corrida’¹⁷, with a given race and its participants being a constituent part of many races that the horse, jockey, breeder, trainer, owner and other participants might take part in over the course of their careers or involvement in the racing industry (Ibid:322).

¹⁷ Mounted bullfight.

5.2 The stud farm

5.2.1 Introduction

The stud farm is a breeding facility that specializes in breeding thoroughbreds (which the breeders themselves may own, have shares in or care for on behalf of other owners) for the purposes of sale (on a commercial basis) or racing themselves (on a personal basis). In this chapter, I investigate the cyclical nature of the breeding industry and how this transposes on to other sectors of the industry, including the auction sector and training/racing sector. In this respect, temporal, spatial, organic, and practical cyclic aspects are identified. The racing calendar starts on 1 August each year, a date shared by all racehorses within each specific year, as a general 'birth' date. The eleven month gestation of a mare, a natural occurrence, controls the service dates of the stallion, in a small 'window' of opportunity since those foals who are born closest to this date, are considered to have an advantage in terms of physical development for racing. Specific auctions are held annually at exact periods in the racing year that coincide with horse growth and development. The subsequent breaking-in of sold horses and their advent into training, all lead to the beginning of their racing careers (as will be investigated further in chapters 6 and 7). This in turn may follow a seasonal cycle of the racing calendar, the familiar ritual of the race meeting (investigated further in chapter 8), repeated various number of times for each participant, year after year, until they are retired back to stud or to a future outside the racing industry. I demonstrate the strong sense of belonging that is associated with the thoroughbred both through branding and name-giving, drawing on Sam Hurn's notion of horse ownership as a manifestation of inalienable culture (2008a). In order to understand the workings of the local industry, I investigate the social, economic and cultural ties between the human participants in the breeding sector. I identify important anthropological aspects of the reciprocal principle in the form of the foster-foal policy and live-foal guarantee, as well as identifying notions of kinship between human and horse. This conception of kinship will be investigated and further defined in the following chapters. I continue with thoughts on human intervention in thoroughbred breeding, which were briefly addressed in the previous chapter on domestication.

5.2.2 New Zealand thoroughbred breeding

According to the statistics for the 2009/2010 season, New Zealand has approximately 8059 registered broodmares, foaling approximately 4132 foals, and standing 167 stallions (NZTR fact book: 7). In her history of the horse in New Zealand, Carolyn Mincham draws on the favourable climate for breeding horses and conditioning foals in a natural setting (2011:159). In addition, the cooler climate than their Australian counterparts facilitates greater activity in the young horses, leading

to earlier development; allowing for similarities with the great thoroughbred nurseries of Ireland (Ibid).

5.2.3 The racing/breeding community

Keaveney (2005:450) draws attention to the strong sense of community evident amongst those who share common notions and concepts relating to horses. At the centre of this community is the focus on the horse; the importance of equine care and welfare and the ideal of a working human-equine relationship are foremost. This sense of an equine community extends to the racing industry and is shaped by a specific focus on the thoroughbred breed. Marcus and Saka (2006: 102) define the term 'assemblage' as an ever-changing network of relationships between human and non-human actors and assorted sites. Assemblage is also an emergent, unstable structure with which to map the actors, materialities, practices, and sites involved. Austrin suggests that the ethnographer using an Actor-Network approach is a detective who exposes hidden networks of assemblages and collations of (animals), and things and the humans that they are connected with (2005: 152). The racing assemblages are constantly changing human and equine participants from the three sectors of the industry, performing daily practices at a variety of sites, but nevertheless joined. Woods further reasons that the originating actor is acknowledged as creating the assemblage and its purpose, as well as the aims of each participant within the assemblage (1997:322). In this respect, the thoroughbred is a focal point around which assemblages can be mapped, originating at the stud farm where the foal is born and extending throughout the course of that horse's life. In light of Austrin's suggestion, daily functions, related materialities, sites and aspirations of breeders, trainers, stable-hands and jockeys, can all be revealed in their layers through the 'detective' process and then sorted to re-establish the original structure of procedures (2005:155).

The Canterbury racing industry is relatively small compared to the nature of thoroughbred racing in other parts of the world and as such, core participants are known to each other. At some point in their career, most human participants will have had some form of interaction with each other, usually in the form of shared interests in a horse.

5.2.4 Elements of kinship and ownership

Although racing of the thoroughbred is viewed as part of the cycle, the social, economic and emotional investment of breeding supersedes that of racing for the owners of stallion-shares, broodmares and the breeders themselves. During the course of participant observation, breeders communicated their frustration with

having to put unsold horses into racing or leasing, through financial necessity. According to these informants, the typical process of involvement in breeding starts off through buying a horse/s at auction, leading to a yearning to breed a horse of their own. Choosing the horse's bloodlines and making that daily investment from the very beginning leads to a greater sense of achievement at the winning post. While this might remain a dream for most, the strong emotional attachment and even 'fictive' kinship with their horse, is enough to maintain enthusiasm. In his 'Manual for kinship analysis', Ernest Schusky (1972: 1) draws attention to the fact that acknowledgement of a kinship relationship draws status to that relationship. Bonnie Berry (2008:77) identifies the notion of reflected status or a 'halo-effect' gained by humans who associate with prominent animals; an element often cited in terms of racehorse ownership. This does not adequately explain the long-term investment of the small-time breeder, especially those who will breed for sentimental reasons, for example from a favourite mare who might not have performed particularly well on the track (personal communication with breeder: 2012).

5.2.4.1 The significance of branding

New Zealand practices a form of chemical tattooing of letters and numbers on both briskets of the thoroughbred horse (see illustrations 8, 9 and 10).¹⁸ This practice is carried out by a qualified veterinarian at the stud farm in addition to micro-chipping, before the yearling is sent off for sale¹⁹. Understanding the branding denotes access to a code system that although accessible to the general public, remains mysterious unless that particular knowledge is accessed through the thoroughbred database. The left brisket is branded with the initials of the person authorised by NZTR to brand thoroughbreds in that region. The brand on the right brisket consists of one set of numbers (the number of that horse to be branded by that official for that season, for example, the twenty-seventh horse), over another (the last digit of the year the horse was born, for example the number 2 denotes either 1992 or 2002).

¹⁸ The harness-racing industry in New Zealand practices a similar form of identification, branding on the neck of the Standardbred with a system of symbols and numbers. Other pure-bred breeds in N.Z. also practice chemical branding. See footnote 21.

¹⁹ Micro-chipping has only been practiced within the last five years.



Illustration 8: Branding of a thoroughbred is clearly visible on the brisket.

The practice of branding reveals the emergent structures or assemblages involved in horse racing; a technical practice inflicted upon horses' bodies in the form of chemical branding, connected through the authorizing agent to the governing body of New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing. Details of the horse's significant achievements, blood ties and human partnerships are noted in an archive of records (held by NZTR), which legitimate the status of the horse within the specific category called 'thoroughbred'. The practice of branding also raises an interesting point in the co-existence of affinity akin to kinship relations in conjunction with ownership of the horse. Branding forms part of the rite of passage for a young, neophyte thoroughbred horse towards full inclusion into the racing sector. As such, it is a form of ritualised mutilation, denoting acceptance by NZTR of the thoroughbred's credentials for inclusion (certified proof of sire and dam as registered 'members' in the breeding sector, since only foals of both are accepted as true thoroughbreds). Chemical branding associates the horse with a life-long identity as a pure-bred; long after their careers are over, re-homed thoroughbreds are still distinctly identifiable and their records remain accessible through NZTR.²⁰ Branding of the thoroughbred is not a reflection of its individual human owner, since it is not the initials of that

²⁰ Australian thoroughbreds are also chemical branded, as are certain pure-bred breeds in New Zealand. Australian horses are distinguished both by their breeding and their names, in that a horse bred in Australia will be noted as: *Dapper (Aus.) 2008*, but if exported this will include its new country of origin: *Sin Wild Fire (Aus.)*, denoting exportation and renaming in Singapore (www.studbook.org.au/FAQ.aspx?ans=22). In New Zealand, Quarter horse cipher brands are registered with the NZTR and branding of this breed follows a similar procedure to Thoroughbreds in cipher branding on the near shoulder and numerical branding on the off shoulder. Unlike Thoroughbreds though, pure-bred Quarter horses also have a distinct 'Q' branded on the off-side buttock. NZTR controls the system of symbol branding for all registered branding of breeds, except for Standardbreds, who have their own clearly defined system (www.agha.co.nz/AQHANZ/handbook).

owner that are permanently marked on the horse²¹. Rather, in initialling with the identification of the NZTR officiating brander suggests ‘membership’ of the racing community rather than ownership by it.²² This is noted particularly through the identification of the thoroughbred’s record, held on file by NZTR, which contains information relative to the horse’s date of birth, breeding and human associations (such as breeder, owner and trainer). Records of older horses will also contain a history of their racing careers (see figure 1).

Rocket Red (NZ) 1992		Chestnut	Gelding				
<div></div>		Sire: Red Tempo (NZ) 1979	Trainer: John Taylor				
<div></div>		Dam: Stylish Living (NZ) 1982	Owner: F.R. Black				
<div></div>		Breeder: G.R. Higgs & Ms W. E. Lukas					
<div></div>		Foaling Date: 18/ 10/ 1992					
Show Horse Rating Chart							
Gear Last Worn:							
Career Statistics Summary:							
	Starts	Wins	Seconds	Thirds	Fourths	Fifths	Earnings
Career:	29	2	2	1	1	7	\$9,350
Flat:	29	2	2	1	1	7	\$9,350
Steeple:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hurdles:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fast (0 - 0 - 0) Good (16 - 1 - 2) Dead (5 - 1 - 0) Slow (3 - 0 - 0) Heavy (5 - 0 - 1)							

Fig. 1: The thoroughbred record associated with branding

The importance of branding as a form of identification remains, despite the added necessity for micro-chipping, as reflected in a conversation with breeder Lisa:

“I once worked on a large stud on the North Island, and there was a stock market crash in the eighties. If I had gone into a big paddock and removed all the horses’ halters, it would have taken them months to work out who was who, apart from their branding. One of the mares actually had the wrong halter on and the stud-master said that ‘this is so and so’ and we had to say, no, that’s actually someone else.”

The inability of many owners to identify their horses, has been noted in thoroughbred racing research conducted in South Africa, and is supported by conversations with

²¹ There are exceptions to this, such as the branding of horses bred at Cambridge Stud, with their distinctive ‘C/S’ logo.

²² North American Thoroughbreds are tattooed on their upper lip; a manner far less noticeable but nevertheless effective in terms of identification. Their tattoo consists of one letter, followed by four numbers, with an asterisk at the beginning to identify non-North American bred horses. As with pure-bred horses in N.Z., lip tattoos in the U.S.A. are used not only for Thoroughbreds, but also for Standardbreds, Quarterhorses, Appaloosas and Arabians (<http://horseracing.about.com/od/statisticsdata/a/aalipattoo.htm> accessed 7 May 2012). This continues the notion of membership of a pure-bred or pedigreed ‘group’ and a branded versus non-branded dichotomy with strong undertones of economic value; since Thoroughbreds are far more prolific than other breeds due to their use as working horses in the racing sector, they are clearly more noticeable.

many of the participants in this research (Spicer: 1998). As Paul, also a breeder states:

“That would be right – most of the owners can’t identify their own horses. That’s one of the reasons that they still want to keep branding them as well as micro-chipping, because anyone can brand but not everyone can microchip. In theory micro-chipping should be so much better, because you can read so much more information onto it.”



Illustration 9: Letters identify who tattooed the horse.



Illustration 10: Numeric tattooing identifies the horse's birth date.

Branding practices emphasize the status of the horse as a commodity to the disregard of its status as a sentient being with which humans maintain cross-species social relations. Ambiguity in respect of both ownership and a form of kinship with

the horses is noted specifically in the unofficial naming (or nicknaming) of thoroughbreds.

5.2.4.2 Naming of horses

In their research into the human-animal connection, Emel and Urbanik draw attention to the power relations evident in the exploitation of animals and that in such instances the animals are denigrated to the existence of mere commodities (2010:206). The identification of thoroughbreds by names rather than numbers is a distinct antithesis of such farming practice in that the horses are identified as both belonging to a particular community and having individual value beyond financial worth. Naming is a practice that reveals forms of evaluation other than that of commodity, indicative of the social relations humans develop with horses. In his article on the human relationship with animal companions, Clinton Sanders identifies the importance of name-giving as a means to establish the animal's identity for humans (2003: 411). He draws a direct comparison to commercial farming practice that discourages individuality for the sake of economics. Young thoroughbreds will generally be given nicknames at the stud farm rather than being registered with their official name at that particular time. This benefit is left up to the owner who purchases the horse at auction, partially as a social and financial manifestation of their new acquisition and also partially due to the fact that the breeder would have to pay a sum in order to register that particular name. The nicknames are quite random and often reflect little quirks of personality or emotion felt by the breeder or their family, such as 'Raspberry' or 'Brownie'.²³ These names might continue along with the horse on their journey through the racing industry, becoming a 'paddock name' that is retained by being written on a tag attached to the halter, or conveyed by word of mouth to the new trainer (personal communication with breeders: 2011). In this respect, the breeders interviewed had assigned nicknames to the foals in their care despite knowing that they would most likely be sold on at auction, potentially going overseas and with the likelihood that they would not see them again. They maintained that familiarity and connection beyond regarding the foal as a potential income-earner or financial commodity. The names chosen were strongly individualised (no two foals had the same name and they were also described in their individuality).

5.2.4.3 The thoroughbred 'immigrant' and 'emigrant'

Rebecca Cassidy draws attention to the human attribute of nationality that is accorded to racehorses and that this remains highly debated in the industry (2003).

²³ Personal values are reflected in the example of one of my informants, who called her foal 'Monty' after 'Natural Horsemanship' guru, Monty Roberts.

A horse can be born in New Zealand, sold at auction to an Australian syndicate and then raced in either Australia or Singapore. If highly successful, the horse might then be sold on to breed in South Africa. The question arises as to the nationality of that horse, be it the country of its birth, the country of its racing success or the country of its breeding success. According to the 2009/2010 NZTR statistics, only two of the top ten stallions standing in New Zealand were actually bred here, yet the fact that they are standing locally gives them credibility as New Zealand assets (2012: 34). Stallions might be identified with their country of origin in brackets next to their name, but this is generally to allow for association with their racing achievements in that country. Breeding success supersedes that of racing with a stallion becoming especially noteworthy through the number of 'group one' winners they have sired. Introducing a foreign pedigree creates the problem of convincing the New Zealand breeding participants of the potential of the 'unknown', as breeder Lisa states:

"We brought in a pedigree line that had never been in New Zealand before. Maybe if it was one of the big studs up north that was doing it, they would have got the breeders to follow them, but because we're just small fish, new guys in the industry, a lot of people looked at us sideways."

In his research into rural hunting politics, Woods draws attention to the value of Actor Network Theory in demonstrating large-scale impacts of small-scale actions (1997:322). The assemblage of horse racing, which starts on a small, local scale, articulates with an international market in thoroughbreds. This includes the bodies of international racing organisation and practice and their connected markets. A focus on the thoroughbreds leaving New Zealand draws attention to the impact of small-scale, localised production (daily life at the stud farm) on macro-scale outcomes (success of New Zealand-bred horses overseas). The large number of New Zealand bred horses that are exported each year, bears testimony to the skill of humans and quality of horses produced here.

Equine Anthropologist Sam Hurn identifies the importance of the Welsh Cob as a manifestation of inalienable culture (2008:340). This is particularly relevant to the association of national identity of the exported New Zealand thoroughbred, in that it 'wears' its sense of belonging through the high visibility of its branding. The notion of the thoroughbred as inalienable culture is continued after exportation through the case of yearlings, whose careers are staunchly followed by their breeders (personal communication with breeders: 2011, 2012). Assemblages continue to be constructed since the breeder has a vested interest in the yearling; their success is reflected in the social and financial value of their sire and dam retained at stud. This means that future half-siblings of that horse can be given greater value at auction (as will be discussed further in the following chapter).

5.2.5 Social, economic/ cultural relations

Goffman states that through roles, socialization is achieved, tasks are allocated and performance is expected with each human having a diversity of connected roles (Lemert & Branaman 1997: 35, 36). The multiplicity of roles evident in the Canterbury racing industry is of particular importance in terms of the social and economic relations that participants have with each other. Unlike the larger breeding areas of the North Island, a proportion of the breeders in the Canterbury region must substitute their income through economic diversification. In this respect, breeding is not the primary source of income, but is nonetheless more than just a hobby. Due to the fluctuating economic conditions, many of the breeders interviewed were relieved to have a more secure alternate income to draw from; many had been unable to sell yearlings or even syndicate unraced fillies. All expressed an aspiration to increase profitability through breeding, implying that this was their desired occupation. Personal observations revealed that some breeders and trainers own businesses, also work in the 'sister' industry of harness racing, or might freelance in specialist horse-handling outside the thoroughbred industry.

5.2.5.1 The stallion-service network

In their research on human-horse relations, Latimer and Birke claim that like-minded, ordered communities of humans and horses are established through shared understanding of their daily roles and specialised practices that sets them apart (2009:6). A network of relations is established; sharing of knowledge surrounding care or experiences with the horses, common interests in a particular horse or blood-line or membership of the same horse-related groups. This is an essential component in the community that is maintained by participants. Social and economic relations within the breeding sector are largely influenced by the role of stallions. Although some breeders use North Island stallions if he matched suitably to their mare, financial constraints or personal preference see Canterbury breeders patronising local stallions, either in the Canterbury or Otago regions (personal communications with breeder informants over period of fieldwork: 2011,2012). This establishes a service network, whereby the mare will travel to the stud standing the stallion, often spending a certain amount of time at that stud until the veterinarian tests her to be in foal. The track successes resulting from the progeny of mating between stallions and mares with different owners, strengthens the ties between them. The sense of community in this region is further strengthened by membership of the Canterbury/Marlborough/Westland Thoroughbred Breeders Association.

Despite the high level of competition, breeding is often swayed by what is socially deemed as 'fashionable' (particular bloodlines prized for their breeding reputations), with the 'herd mentality' (peer pressure), further popularising such bloodlines

(Personal communication with informants: 2011). This establishes a current problem both in the racing and breeding sectors, in that the market and tracks are flooded with particular bloodlines; where a stallion would generally serve 40 to 50 mares a season, popularity pushes that up to 150. Two years later, there is a flood of those bloodlines in racing, indicating that the greed of one begets problems for others; smaller breeders with their less popular stallions are squashed, because few people wish to patronise something that might not sell at auction, when other stallions are freely and prolifically available (Personal communication with breeder:2011). That is not to say however, that all breeders will follow the herd.

Many breeders make use of a computer programme (TesioPower) to select possible matches for their mares. TesioPower is a database that holds the names and breeding of all registered thoroughbreds (region specific). As with the ISIS (International Species Information System) noted by Whatmore and Thorne in their study of captive elephants, such programmes exist to allow for 'ideal' breeding matches, but ultimately denigrate the animal to the level of 'specimens' (2000: 188). However, this choice of stallion service is not always purely a social or financially-motivated decision. While many breeders might use the TesioPower computer programme to find the most suitable stallion for their mare, the decision is not left purely to technological possibilities, but often becomes cemented by emotional certainties. Some of the breeders interviewed, stated that they liked to go and visit the stallion selected by TesioPower, in order to see whether he conforms to their ideal physical type that they have in their mind, as well as using the opportunity to observe his temperament. He must catch their eye and look right. Discussions are often held with knowledgeable friends within the community, gaining their input on the stallion; for example if they say that the stallion throws foals with crooked legs, then one steers clear of him, but stallions that throw foals with good temperaments are sought after (personal communication with breeder informants during the course of fieldwork: 2011/2012).

5.2.5.2 Reciprocity through the 'live-foal' guarantee

The 'live-foal' guarantee is an aspect of exchange relations within the thoroughbred community. This is a facet of the stallion service that ensures service to that stallion or another stood by the stud, free of charge if the mare does not give birth to a live foal. Reciprocity is defined as the continuance of a specific relationship through an obligation to carry out a service (MacCormack 1976:90). This customary practice, for which conformity is expected, reflects the uncontrollable outcomes of breeding (itself a naturalcultural practice, involving human intervention in procreative activity) being

eased by a shared commitment to economic fairness.²⁴ MacCormack draws attention to the quality of relationships between individuals in a reciprocal connection, namely the presence of friendship (Ibid: 94). The live foal guarantee cements a relationship between breeders in a mixture of legal obligation and old fashioned courtesy.

5.2.5.3 Reciprocity through the ‘foster-foal’ concept

This concept adopted by the Thoroughbred Breeders Associations throughout New Zealand, ensures a database is kept each breeding season to record mares that have miscarried and foals that have been orphaned, so that the breeders of each may be put in contact with each other and the mare may nurse and tend to the foal naturally. The significance of this system is that it extends to the entire equine community and is not restricted to thoroughbreds alone. Community members operate through their network to ensure that orphaned foals are matched to miscarried mares, as another aspect to the reciprocal practices of horse husbandry, allowing the miscarried mare to nurture what she has lost and the foal to have a natural, healthier chance of survival. The value of the exchange is seen in multiple contexts, that between human actors, between horses and also between human and animal participants. Within the two islands, two separate forms of this practice occur. Since users of this system on the North Island pay a fee²⁵ thereby sustaining market relations, on the South Island the service is provided free of charge. It is this practice on the South Island, which connects with Firth’s identification of reciprocal ties having distinct social significance (1974:313,348).²⁶ Burrige points to the category of filial relations in reciprocity, whereby gifts are given without the anticipation of repayment (1969:94). This theory can be applied to the foster foal concept on the South Island, stressing its significance in cementing the sense of

²⁴ Zabeel, son of the famous late champion-sire Sir Tristram and currently holding the highest service-fee in New Zealand (\$100 000), stands at Cambridge Stud on the North Island and does not have a ‘live foal’ guarantee attached to his service fee. When I investigated this further I was told that due to his age, they cannot guarantee that he will still be able to serve mares in the following season and therefore they could not guarantee service by him or any other stallion of his worth (the closest following stallion service fee at Cambridge Stud is that of Stravinsky, who commands \$22,500 +gst – at the time of writing). An informant mentioned however that interested breeders would be secure with their own insurance policies, in case of failure.

²⁵ A set fee of \$150 is charged to the owner of the foal if they are a member of the Thoroughbred Breeders Association, or \$250 if they don’t belong to the organisation (<http://www.nzthoroughbred.com>).

²⁶ In previous ethnographic research into relationships of breeders in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, I found that the foster foal service was also practiced in that region. In that context though, it took the form of balanced reciprocity, in that there was an unspoken obligation to assist the breeder of the mare if an occasion should arise in the future where s/he needed assistance. An email conversation with equine anthropologist Sam Hurn revealed that a foal fostering service is not practiced amongst the Cardinauts in their breeding of Welsh Cobs.

community and relationships both within the thoroughbred sector and throughout the equine community on the South Island. Breeder Paul defines the concept:

“It’s basically putting people into communication with other people. In the North Island they charge for it. In the South Island, they don’t care if it’s a standardbred, warmblood or whatever. We pull together that way. If we can help someone out, we’re grateful for that.”

When asked if the breeders have any expectations after the service, Paul responded:

“Breeders up north have no expectations, but he (breeder) helped with the agistment bill for that mare. Another I’ve heard of, the staff were rapped because the owner shouted them all morning tea, and then drinks.”

Fellow breeder Lisa described the feeling amongst participants in this scheme:

“I think if you put your mare up, you’re not expecting anything in return... hoping that if the same thing happened to you, that somebody would help you out.”

5.2.6 Human-horse emotional relations

5.2.6.1 A sense of knowing each other

In her research into the human-horse relationship, sociologist Keri Brandt identifies an important aspect of the pre-interview ritual for the ethnographer into the equine community; that of meeting the horses (2004:304). This ritual was maintained in my research and as Brandt points out, contextualised the relationship between human and equine participants (Ibid). The following entry from my fieldwork journal describes this ritual process:

‘Lucy offered to introduce me to the horses when I arrived at the stud farm, giving the distinct impression that she was introducing her family. The horses themselves responded like family. She identified each one by name, recalling their breeding and significant achievements or personality quirks. She identified without hesitation the lineage of foals and track successes of sire and dam. They all adored her and came over the moment we entered the paddocks.’

The ability of human caretakers in the breeding industry to recognise each horse in their care is a common feature in the Canterbury region. Breeder Stacey explains:

“It’s probably like a school teacher in a class of children; everybody’s got their own different little wee things that you recognise – this person is a red-head, that one’s blond, that one has spiky hair, wavy hair and they’ve all got distinctive features and

markings and stuff, so you just learn them pretty quickly. Same as knowing people, like the school teacher knows the parents, you know stuff about them, and ...yeah it sort of comes pretty quickly. At the stud farm you've got about 300 horses and you can recognise any one of them from across the paddock."

5.2.6.2 Human-horse relations as kinship

Sahlins refers to a distinctive quality of kinship, as a mutualism defined by shared emotion (2011:2, 3). He further identifies the sociological construction of kinship as equating that of biological or genealogical ties; a sharing in the life processes of "...birthing and dying, and the effects of bodily injury." (Ibid: 4). This process of identification also applies to the unique kinship relations between the thoroughbreds and their human caretakers. Many racehorses fall into the anthropological category of pseudo-kinship, namely a form of fictive-kinship whereby humans 'adopt' the horse into their family. Schusky notes that slaves are included in this category in certain societies; an analogy of which bears some similarity to some perceptions of the racehorse (1972:8). The participants in the breeding industry share in the life processes of their horses on a regular basis, and their daily lives reflect the nurturing of humans within naturalcultural procedures. Breeder Mary describes the emotions of staff surrounding the labour of a broodmare:

"She phones me in the middle of the night and when the mare lies down, the foaling alarm goes off. She calls me and I jump out of bed. I have my clothes all laid out. It's very exciting."

In terms of a familial-type relationship, Stacey, a breeder, describes her emotional connection with the foals in her care:

"They're more than a regular pet. Sometimes you can't wait for them to go because you clash with them, like 'I'm just going to have to deal with you until you're old enough to go to the sales and then you're gone'. Others, it's really hard parting with them and you sort of follow them with a lot more interest, find out how they're doing and what's happening. It's really hard with them I suppose because you start to get too emotionally attached to them, because when you've bred them, they have to go one day."

This emotion is shared by breeder Lucy, who described her attachment to her horses as her 'babies', and stated that she loves to follow their careers. She gave an example of one particular foal that was sold on locally, stating that she would ask the trainer after her regularly at the races, while she keeps tabs on the well-being of another by asking the farrier after her. They would discuss the horse using her paddock name, implying a shared personal attachment to the horse. She describes how she felt at one particular auction as she watched a horse she had bred being led in for sale:

“I cried when the hammer fell, cried when the horse left the arena and cried again when I had to say goodbye to the horse.”

5.2.6.3 Moral obligations of kinship

The emotional bonds between humans and horses in the stud sector are established and maintained over a long period of time with an interspecies kinship that determines its own ethics and moral code. Many of the breeders interviewed, stated that their broodmares would be with them until the day they die, despite being retired from breeding duties. They were however given other responsibilities on the farm, namely the ‘supervision’ and mentoring of younger horses or travelling partners for young broodmares (personal communication with breeders: 2011, 2012). Although there are examples of horses being sent to “the hounds”, or “the zoo”, many of the informants stated that they buried their horses and frequently marked the graves with a tree or Rose bush (personal communication with breeders: 2011, 2012). The intense emotion felt by breeders is evident in the following statement by Sir Patrick Hogan on the anticipated death of his favourite stallion, Sir Tristram:

“You’ve done everything right so far – when it’s time to go, please just drop dead...I’d hate to nurse him and not know whether to put him down or keep him alive.” (Hayward 2007:278)



Illustration 11: Meeting the broodmares and foals.

Further evidence of the moral obligations associated with this form of kinship is noted in the various claims by informants about the financial sacrifices made in order to keep their particular horses. This might include having to take on a second job or curbing a chosen lifestyle, demonstrating a form of 'financial altruism'. Moral obligations to particular horses prevent re-homing; such horses are considered to be part of the family, as breeder Lisa notes with regards to their career expectations for their horse:

"It doesn't matter. He is part of our family and will be with us till the day he dies".

5.2.7 Human intervention and Thoroughbred breeding

'Ethical equitation' is a recent term that questions the use of horses for human cultural purposes and calls for a more responsible attitude towards the breeding of horses, as well as lifting the restrictions placed on cloning exceptional qualities (McLean & McGreevy 2010: 203, 208). Rebecca Cassidy draws into focus the associated questions of artificial insemination and genetic engineering and their banning by Thoroughbred Breeders Associations around the world (2002a). Opponents to the T.B.A.'s standpoint accuse the organisation of purely financial motivations, but this question underlies the epitome of the racing industry; the fundamental relationships connecting breeders and horses through natural breeding are the lifeblood of the industry. The social and economic connection of one stud farm to another through stallion-service would be all but destroyed by a clinician and DNA transfer, as would the role of nature in the natureculture relation. The choice of the stallion to mate with a particular mare remains as a constant reminder that the process is ultimately controlled by nature; breeder Stacey describes the mixed emotions she believes are going through the stallion's mind:

"They will like some mares, and they will be like, 'I don't want to jump on that one,' and you'll be like, 'You have to jump on that one,' and they'll be like, 'I don't like her, she's not pretty at all.' And you're like, there's poor me standing here and he's like, 'No, I don't like her,' (laughing)."

The focus on a short time frame for producing the foal, leads to 'acceptable' human interventions in breeding that attempt to manipulate nature for purely economic gain. These include artificial lighting and chemical (hormone) injections (Milligan 2011: 15).²⁷ The practice of twin infanticide although not common, is also generally accepted as both a financial and health necessity. Broodmares are scanned by a veterinarian in order to assess the pregnancy in its early stages. Intervention is made to 'abort' the less developed foetus, as there is a strong likelihood of pre-term death

²⁷ Since all racehorses draw the same birth date for racing eligibility, the closest the foal is born to August 1 is perceived to be more advantageous in terms of growth and development for racing as a two year old.

and resultant infection for both the remaining foetus and mare (personal communication with breeder: 2012). The weakening through shared pregnancy for the foals would mean that neither would be physically strong enough to survive the rigours of racing, thus the infanticide protects both human and equine from respective economic and physical losses.

The assemblages of social, economic and emotional connections that play an important role in the breeding industry on the South Island are perhaps best summed up in the words of Canterbury/Marlborough/Westland Thoroughbred Breeders Association President, Myles Gordon (2011:31, 32):

“We understand how hard the breeding/racing industry is at the moment and at times we all wonder why we persevere, other than an inherent love of the horse at the end of the day. Watching them grow, mature, then following their careers and seeing them achieve gives us the kick to keep us breeding, through the good and the bad years.”

5.3 Summary

The cyclical nature of the racing industry depicts the relevance of all sectors and makes it difficult to define an exact starting point. The life of a thoroughbred is the focal point whereby assemblages of human participants, daily practices, sites and objects are intricately linked through the natural/cultural process whereby the thoroughbred horse ‘becomes’ a racehorse. Just as in the Spanish mounted bullfight, the lives of the participants in the racing industry revolve around the horses (Thompson 2010: 323). The ties that draw participants in this sector into a community are most noticeable through the stallion-service networks and reciprocity through the ‘live-foal’ guarantees and foster-foal concept. Membership of this community and the wider thoroughbred racing community in general is established through chemical branding, identifying the thoroughbred as belonging to that community. The process of branding is also identified as an important ritual in the rite of passage for the young neophyte thoroughbred; part of the process that humans recognize in the pivotal events they subject horses to. As such, the young horse’s presence in the breeding and auction sectors of the racing industry are seen as liminal phases until full acceptance (through the training sector) into racing. In the following section of the auction, I will continue with the notion of the auction as part of the liminal process for the young thoroughbred, drawing on the importance of the actual auction ritual as a key element in establishing the social and economic input of the human participants. Following on Rebecca Cassidy’s notion of ‘falling in love’ with the thoroughbred at auction, I look at the emotional connection made through this process (2005).

Chapter Six: The Auction

“If you go to the sales and you don’t like a horse, well then you don’t bid and you just keep on walking. But if you breed it and you don’t sell it, well then you have to take it back home with you. I have four steers that I bought at the sales a couple of months ago and I just don’t like them, so I’m taking them to the sales next week. They’re going. For the breeders it’s got to be tough – they love their horses and they’re trying, but it’s just not going.”

Conversation with owner-trainer Henry, 2011.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw extensively on the theories of Rebecca Cassidy concerning the auction and its rich source of symbolism and meaning for the racing industry (2002, 2007). In the previous chapter, I drew on Cassidy’s concept of the auction as the next stage in the liminal phase of the neophyte racehorse, having left infancy behind at the stud-farm and undergoing the auction ritual in order to proceed to the final stage of initiation at the race (2002b: 91). In this chapter, I draw on the function of the actual auction as a means of economic exchange, as well as the unequal sharing of information (Cassidy: 2005). The latter element is used to support the opinion of an inclusion of both insiders and outsiders in defining a racing ‘community’, as well as identifying aspects of social connections between primary and secondary participants. In their focus on secular ritual, Moore and Myerhoff draw attention to the role of ritual in establishing ‘unquestionable doctrines’ and depicting the socio-moral code for that group (Moore & Myerhoff 1977: 3). In this respect, the secular ritual of the thoroughbred auction establishes an acceptable value of the young horse, combining with the ideal of potential for breeding to bring success. In this chapter I have adapted Moore and Myerhoff’s ‘formal properties’ of secular ritual in order to describe the auction, drawing on the ritualized behaviour of primary participants and the connection this has with motivation (1977). I pursue these ideas of ritual further in chapter 8 The Racecourse, noting the importance of the race rituals in terms of Durkheim’s paradigm; the demonstration of social relations, roles and conflicts within the racing community (1961). The element of festivity is noted as part of the background to the ritual (Goffman: 1997:208). In support of Cassidy’s identification of the socio-economic risk prevalent in this sector, I link the element of value between participants at the auction and the breeders, in what Sam Hurn identifies in the horse as a symbol of inalienable culture (Cassidy 2002) (Hurn 2008). I describe the actual auction, establishing the socio-economic value of the horse and the linking of breeding and racing through the commentary of the auctioneer. In order to follow the movements of my participants, in what Marcus defines as the essence

of a multi-sited ethnography, this chapter has specific focus on the national yearling sales held at Karaka, Auckland (1995:106, 109).

6.2 Social and economic factors versus emotion

In the cyclic nature of thoroughbred racing, the auction functions as an important link between the breeding and racing sectors, connecting the assemblages created between human and horse at the stud farm, with their future connections at the racing stables and tracks.²⁸ This showcase of potential winners links progeny to the victories of their bloodlines, through the symbolism and discourse of the stud farm, such as posters of the winners at race-tracks and the strong focus on previous champions on the track who now stand at stud (see illustration 12). Mary Midkiff draws attention to the fact that "...horses (still) connote money and money still implies a kind of power," (2001: 127). In her extensive research on thoroughbred racing, anthropologist Rebecca Cassidy draws attention to the thoroughbred auction in terms of its importance as a means of economic exchange, with a central focus on the yearling sale (2005). The national yearling sales at Karaka, Auckland annually draws the attention of New Zealanders to the economic power/status attached to this particular breed of horse, by reporting on the amount of money that is bid on certain days of this internationally recognised sale, as well as noting the price of the highest bid. The sale lasts a week and is divided into specific sale days, with the most prestigious horses catalogued into the first two days of the sale and the horses with less proven breeding being sold towards the end of the week. In spite of this categorization of value, all horses accepted to be sold at this venue are of considerable quality.

In order to understand the significance of these sales, it is necessary to consider the statistics. In the 2009/2010 New Zealand season, 1511 thoroughbreds were exported overseas; 891 of those went to neighbouring Australia, 236 to Singapore, 159 to Hong Kong and the balance went to countries including Macau, Malaysia, Korea and the U.S.A. (NZTR 2012: 7, 28). A large proportion of these exports were sold at the Karaka National yearling sales, held from the last week of January into the first week of February and showcasing yearlings from around the country. The strong connection between New Zealand and Australia in terms of thoroughbred exports is demonstrated by the fact that pedigrees and estimated values are not finalised until after the Melbourne Cup Carnival (Vela 2012: 4,5). In 2010, 1476 yearlings were offered at Karaka of which 1129 sold, making a gross turnover of NZ\$93,567,400. The highest bid was NZ\$2 million, for a Zabeel x Diamond Like colt, while the median price was NZ\$42,000 (Ibid: 38). While many South Island breeders

²⁸ New Zealand Bloodstock advertises the auctions with the catch-phrase: 'Where winning begins', in an attempt to tie in the auction with financial successes on the track.

send their best horses to the Karaka sales and many Canterbury owners might buy a horse occasionally or even regularly at these sales, most also utilise New Zealand Bloodstock's South Island sale held in August. Since this sale is for two year olds and mixed bloodstock, it does not command the same prestige associated with the Karaka yearling sales. The international significance of Karaka is emphasised by the display of flags from New Zealand's top equine trading partners inside the auction arena, as well as regular mention made by the auctioneer of countries or prestigious meetings where a New Zealand-bred horse wins. In contrast, while some of the horses sold at auction on the South Island will also go overseas, this kind of claim is not overtly manifested. Some informants stated that they would not buy a horse at this sale, since many were horses that could not be sold at Karaka, and therefore raised a warning flag to them (personal communication: 2011, 2012). However, due to financial constraints, late development of horses and their geographical location, many breeders preferred to patronise the local sale. In contrast to the purpose built facility at Karaka, the South Island auctions are held at the Canterbury Agricultural Centre, sharing facilities with other farming practices and lending to a more relaxed atmosphere in general (see illustrations 13 and 14).

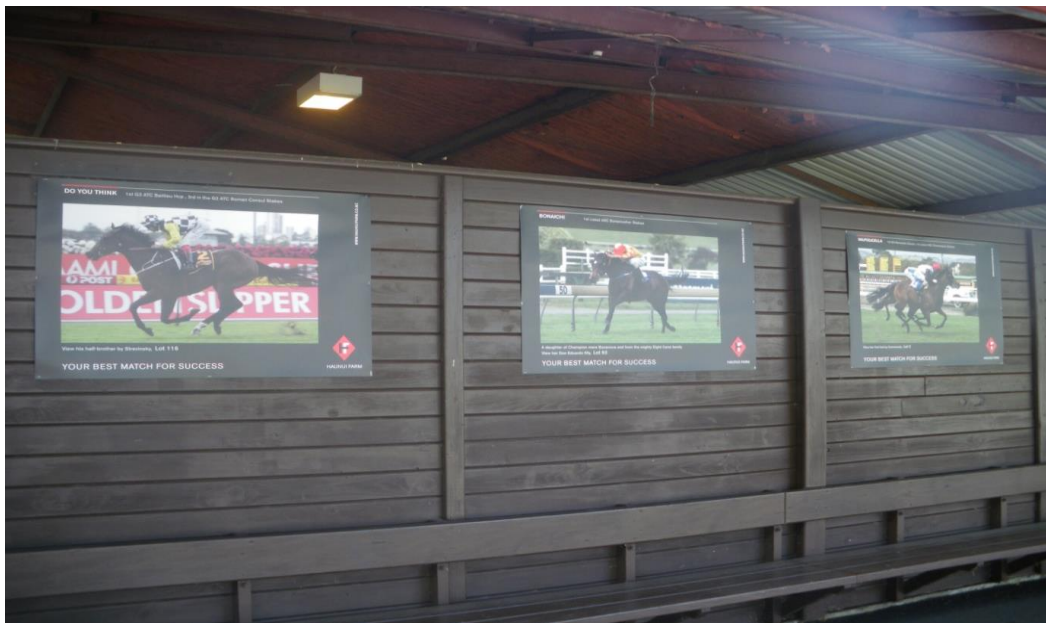


Illustration 12: Posters of race-track winners at the auction link breeding with racing.



Illustration 13: Karaka, the purpose-built facility for Thoroughbred auctions



Illustration 14: Shared sale yard used for the South Island sale

6.3 The auction as a secular ritual

Goffman's view that "Moments of festivity are attached to the acquisition of new possessions", appropriately describes the sales in that breeders have colourful banners and hospitality tents denoting their specific areas, while buyers walk around with an air of excitement (1997:208). This particular aspect of the industry has its own ritual for future owners of these horses, a ritual in which participants themselves identify three constituent parts to acquiring a horse at auction, namely pre-auction analysis of pedigree, secondly viewing selected horses and finally bidding and claiming ownership of the horse (Rodley 2012:7). Moore and Myerhoff describe secular ritual as containing complex symbolic actions that serve a specific purpose, although allude to hidden meanings (1977: 5). In terms of their 'formal properties' of secular ritual, the three constituent parts of the horse auction are defined as pre-auction ceremonial analysis of pedigree, leading up to ritualised viewing of the horses and finally participation in the actual auction.

6.3.1 Part 1: Ceremonial analysis of pedigree

The first part of the auction ritual reflects what Cassidy describes as an unequal distribution of knowledge and the fact that the thoroughbred auction is very much a game of chance, in which those who know how the game is played have the advantage over newcomers (2007:100,106). This notion of racing as a 'game' is a metaphor commonly used by the participants, especially those who have been born into the industry and is investigated further in chapter 8: The racecourse. At the auction, those 'in the know' will have studied the auction catalogue prior to the event, researching their potential yearling's blood-lines through the Tesio computer programme.²⁹ This enables them to establish the success of particular bloodlines on offer and potential of specific yearlings. Some participants will research bloodlines back to the nineteenth century (Personal communication with breeder/owner Mary: 2012). Rebecca Cassidy identifies the elements of risk and pedigree at the auction, in that a yearling will command a set reserve value based on its pedigree, yet the risk remains for the buyer in that it may never live up to the expectations set by that pedigree (2002b:89). In this respect, breeding is overtly demonstrated, with claims on famous bloodlines foremost (see illustration 8). As such, they become what equine anthropologist Sam Hurn identifies as inalienable culture, in that they are forever linked through their parents, to specific stud farms (2008).

²⁹ For an edited example of what Tesio shows, see Diagram 2: Continuity of naming demonstrated through generations in the following chapter.



Illustration 15: The unknown yearling is given identity by her sire and dam's breeding

Technology increasingly plays an important role in selection, with the advent of chest x-rays noted as a selling factor for the sales this year (2012); this is depicted in a later conversation with informant Mary, who had been unaware that most breeders were providing x-rays this year, rather than leaving that up to the future owner:

"Then I took horses up to the sales for a very expensive holiday in Auckland and didn't sell those, so it does make it quite hard. I love the auction up there – would have loved it more if my horses had sold, but the bad advice we were given..."

In this conversation, Mary also reflects on the auction as an unequal sharing of information and the difficulty for newcomers up against 'older' participants. This supports the notion that the informal information network is evidence that inclusion and exclusion factors found within the racing industry continue in this sector.³⁰ There are different levels of inclusion with those who are fully 'initiated', generally those who have been raised in the industry, at the centre of understanding and participation. They have access to the most information due to their complete devotion established through 'blood' ties (usually born into a racing family). Other participants might experience a certain amount of inclusion, but it is harder for the

³⁰ Overheard a bloodstock agent on the phone with a client, stating "If there had been no interest in the horse then I would have been worried." This implies that some are party to information and not others – the 'hidden secret' issue of the horse being boycotted (no bids) because of some insider knowledge.

new-comers to become fully initiated and accepted. Those on the very outside of the group do not belong to the racing industry; their casual attendance at the auction is generally purely through curiosity. Inclusion is facilitated by an understanding of the auctioneer's specific dialect, which will include loose references to champion racehorses and broodmares, key race meetings both in New Zealand and overseas, as well as successful human participants in the industry, both past and present. This aspect emphasises the international nature of this inclusion, in that the auctioneer will refer to certain successful trainers or bloodstock agents by name.

6.3.2 Part 2: Ritualised viewing of horses

This second stage in the auction ritual was followed during participant observation, along with the observation that:

'Everyone walks about perusing their catalogue, looking for the horse they want to investigate further. In order to look the part, one must arm oneself with a programme, speak a few words like, "Ah, a Savabeel colt," then one seems to belong.' (Entry from fieldwork diary, Karaka yearling sales, 2012).

In order to facilitate what Rebecca Cassidy calls "falling in love" with their potential horse, the second phase of the buying ritual involves the process of coming into close personal contact with the yearling, in a form of interspecies communication (2005: 57, 63). Interested parties will feel its legs, assess its temperament and all importantly watch its 'form' as the stable hand walks and trots the horse as requested. This idea of an emotional love is challenged by Lynda Birke biologist and authority on human-horse relations, who ascribes this to a love of making money or winning (2008:107). On one hand, it is an accepted fact that most racehorses will never earn their keep and when there are so many horses of similar value and breeding to choose from, something deeper must appeal to the potential owner; an emotional connection between human and horse needs to be made. I contend that this 'love' functions on a scale of importance, from a strong emotional attachment to a firm social and economically motivated decision. For many owners the horse must be socially acceptable (at the higher level of auction, the horse must have a good or at least popular pedigree with the likes of top sires such as Pins, Savabeel, Stravinsky or the leading sire, Zabeel). Some of my informants stated that they were motivated to bid on horses purely because of either the sire or the dam and a personal desire to own a horse from that particular bloodline. Some chose to buy siblings of horses that they already owned, demonstrating a mixture of financial satisfaction and fictive kinship (an important aspect of the emotional connection of human and horse, which is developed further in this thesis). Economically the 'movement' of the horse must convince the prospective buyer that it has the chance to win. This is a personalised encounter between human and horse, in contrast to

the open, public parading of the horse in the pre-auction rings where they are on view in a more generalised manner (see illustrations 4, 5 and 6). It is here that the buyer will decide if they want to bid on the horse, as noted by trainer John Sargent “...(it) stands out when it stands up, it looks at you and you like it,” (Rodley 2012:39). The importance of walking the horse to show its form is enacted many times leading up to and during the auction. This ritualised viewing is an important aspect of the auction and highlights the emotional connection of owners and trainers with the horse; most often they will have their first contact with the horse at this venue. For the breeder, however, it is often a bitter-sweet parting on an emotional level, but nevertheless an essential economic part to his/her business. The auction continues to construct social ties between participants in the industry, as a connection is made (whether explicit or implicit) between breeder and owner as well as trainer in terms of the future career of that yearling.



Illustration 16: Individualised viewing of horses

6.3.3 Part 3: Participation in the auction

While the second stage in the ritual is a personalised encounter between human and horse, a strong contrast is made with the beginning of the third stage. The yearling is led towards the auction building with an open, public parading in the pre-auction rings where they are on view in a more generalised manner. The importance of walking the horse to show its form is enacted many times leading up to and during the auction. The horses are paraded around a pre-entrance ring which serves a dual purpose because it gets the young horses used to the noise of the auctioneer and crowd, while also allowing the crowd to see and judge the horse's all-important 'movement'. In accordance with the 'formal properties' of secular ritual, repetition is a

major part of the procedure, with the social actors self-consciously controlling the excited young horse (Moore & Myerhoff 1977: 7). In the second pre-auction ring as well as in the main auction ring, horses are paraded in a clockwise direction on turf 'carpet'. This is green in colour, blending a natureculture setting. Inevitably, most of these horses excitably defecate upon entering the arena, and this evidence of nature is promptly removed by a staff-person. The artificial nature of the 'grass' however does not detract from the strong smell of urine and faeces that can be almost overpowering, a constant reminder that nature, although controlled by culture, is still prevalent in this area. Similarly, the horses and their human handlers are immaculately presented in accordance with the property of 'evocative presentational style' (Ibid).³¹



Illustration 17: General public viewing at first pre-auction ring

³¹ Later conversation with an informant revealed that there is a strong dress-code for stable hands, with smarter clothing required on the premier and select sale days, and more relaxed clothing on the festival days.



Illustration 18: General public viewing at second pre-auction ring

The auction ritual calls upon the young horse to demonstrate acceptable or ‘special’ behaviour that draws on the sense of human control (Ibid). The yearlings, although still fairly young, must behave in a manner that shows that they have been well socialised, but as Rebecca Cassidy suggests, they must be active (2007:110). This duality of human expectations for the yearlings is an implicit attempt by the breeders to demonstrate the dual membership of the yearling in both natural and cultural worlds; while passivity denotes an easy entry into the cultural realm of racing, the ‘wildness’ that is appealed to in terms of active trotting when demanded by the human handler, shows a tendency towards natural competitiveness. The yearlings themselves are in a liminal phase, transitioning from babies at the stud-farm to racehorses at the racing stables (Cassidy 2002b:91). While their handlers acknowledge this juvenile trait in the manner that they talk reassuringly to their horse, they also expect the young horse to react appropriately with adult-like understanding, such as demonstrating feistiness when requested (personal observations at Karaka:2012).³²

An important element of the ritual concerns the actual bidding; a component which demonstrates the duality of meanings and can depict an organised chaos. The formal property of ‘order’ is evident under the authority of the auctioneer and includes instances of impulsiveness, but bounded by distinct order (Moore &

³² Overheard at Karaka, a handler talks to a jumpy horse “Come on, catch up to your friend”, in a tone similar to that used for a child.

Myerhoff 1977: 7). The beginning of the ritual is noted when the horse and handler enter the arena, always following a clockwise rotation. If the horse is startled and steps inside the circle, a turn is made to continue on in the same direction. Similarly, when the gavel drops signalling the end to that auction, the handler will continue around to complete the circle before exiting the arena. Each horse (or 'lot') is always introduced by means of identifying its breeding, on a par with human introductions that draw on familiarity with ancestral names and accomplishments. This draws on what Roy Rappaport calls the 'collective dimension'; a merging of the collective contributions of both breeding and racing sectors in the auction arena (In Moore & Myerhoff 1977: 8). Blurring of the human-animal boundary is commonplace with references made to families that could connote either a bloodline or breeder:

"Three quarter blood to Dynamo, he's an absolute cracker too...", "...Out of a top mare, from a great family...", "...What a good filly she was for the family too, the 'Smith' family..."

(Observations at Karaka Sales: 2012).

Rebecca Cassidy draws attention to the apparent transparency of the auction and this notion is given credibility with the honesty of vendors in identifying specific health issues in their horses (2007:100). Horses are noted as being windsuckers, or having had a mild case of colic the previous evening. Mentioning long-term negative connections, such as weaknesses in a particular bloodline are considered taboo (personal observations at auctions: 2011, 2012). Despite the attempt at openness with the circular structure of the auction room, bidding is also often 'hidden' by the specific location chosen by the bidder (Cassidy 2007: 100). This was observed on a lot that went for NZ\$100,000, where the winning bid was placed from the top corner of the seating area, out of view from the majority of participants in the auction.

The auctioneer's voice starts the bidding at an acceptable minimum amount and continues to address the audience in a gradually increasing crescendo (Cassidy 2007: 99). In terms of the etiquette demanded inside the auction arena, 'spotters' or auction assistants do not usually address the auctioneer verbally except in acknowledging a bid. They face the audience and call out loudly, raising an arm to catch the auctioneer's attention. The inclusion of better known participants is most evident in the manner in which they can make their bid known to the auction staff, with a gesture as simple as a wink (Rodley 2012: 12). The auctioneer ascends in speed and urgency as bidding is raised, yet the 'cosy intimacy' with the included participants is maintained through personalised mention:

"I got twelve thousand dollars with Michael now... seventeen if you like her, the hammer comes up, at twenty thousand for her over here. At twenty (laughing)..."

*think it should be twenty. We can do a deal for her.” (Observation at Karaka sales: 2012).*³³

While the auctioneer rises in price and urgency with his calling, his ‘spotters’ call out loudly in a shout to catch his attention and gesture with a sharp raising of their hand, often pointing the hand in the direction of the bidder. Spotters hold their hand up constantly while their spot’s bid is the leading one. If another bidder raises the bid near them, they will raise the other arm. The following excerpt from my field notes describes the specific nature of this non-verbal communication:

‘The spotter puts up two hands towards the auctioneer, denoting that someone has raised the bid by \$10 000. If the auctioneer says an amount that isn’t what the spotter called out for, the spotter and auctioneer communicate through a series of hand gestures, including holding hand upright with another cutting it perpendicularly in half, to mean half the amount raised on what the auctioneer calls. The spotter won’t call out to contradict or tell the auctioneer something, as it seems contrary to auction etiquette. A hand held up with a subsequent movement of the thumb means raise it up by \$500, or holding a hand with fingers widely spread facing towards the auctioneer, also denotes a raise in bid of only \$500.’

Meanwhile the horse-handler can be seen talking softly to the horse, keeping him/herself perfectly calm so that their demeanour may be conducted through to the horse. This demonstrates a prescribed change of roles between human participants in the auction and the horse in that the auctioneer and his assistants display a momentary ‘wild’ frenzy of bidding, while the horse displays calmness in his collected walk around the arena. The auctioneer slows his speech and intonation to imply that a lot is coming to an end, brought to an abrupt and final conclusion by a hard slamming down of the hammer. The significance of the loud noise of the gavel demonstrates the sense of order that is brought to the ritual; symbolic of both finality and legality on a par with a judge’s decision in a court case.

A fair number of the participants in the auction are bloodstock agents, or pin-hookers.³⁴ Rebecca Cassidy identifies these participants as experts of the unknown, with a tendency for bloodstock agents’ abilities to be acknowledged if the horse succeeds and to be absolved of responsibility if the horse fails (2002b:95, 97). The relationship between these two particular participant groups and the equines that

³³ The particular Kiwi flavour of the auction is found in the auctioneer’s phrases such as ‘On the whole they came in late, but they got the lollies’, meaning that the bidding started slowly but rose up to an acceptable if not profitable price.

³⁴ Speculative buyers of bloodstock, who have no intention of keeping the horse for racing or breeding purposes.

form the epitome of their business, is aptly described by Jane Smiley as “...a used car...and the dealer...”, a metaphor that has been used by various other participants in the Canterbury racing industry to refer derogatorily to participants that lack an emotional attachment to the horse (2005:23).

Moore and Myerhoff identify ‘dimensions of ritual outcomes’, including that of the obvious purpose of the ritual, clear symbolic representations, inherent statements, the effects on participants and a depiction of ‘culture versus chaos’ (1977: 15, 16). In the thoroughbred auction, the purpose remains that of selling/buying a horse. Symbolic representation and inherent statements are made in claims on the success of the juvenile’s bloodline or associations made with successes from that particular breeder. Social relationships are affected in that participants become symbolically tied through the selling or purchase of the horse, while ‘culture’ establishes the value of the horse amidst the chaos of the bidding.



Illustration 19: The auction

6.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have drawn on the theories of secular ritual proposed by Moore and Myerhoff, defining the three stages associated with buying a thoroughbred at

auction. The ceremonial inspection of the catalogue is seen as a precursor to the ritualised viewing of the chosen horse, an aspect partially defined in terms of Cassidy's notion of 'falling in love' with the horse. The third part of the auction process concerns the auction ritual, where potential owners place bids on the horses that they desire, and the breeders await financial compensation for nearly three years of speculation. Cassidy's reference to the economic exchange evident in the auction as well as the unequal balance of knowledge has significant implications for the socio-economic nature of this sector. Elements of culture versus chaos are highlighted through the auction ritual and an ultimate sense of order is established that gives legitimacy to the transaction. The auction draws together participants from both breeding and training sectors through the actions of the owner in purchasing the horse. In the following section, I show how the liminal phase of the young horse continues after the ritual of the auction, entering into the training sector with the goal of ultimate inclusion into a race.

Chapter Seven: The training stables

“I spoke to a trainer called ‘Roger Smith’ the other day. He once trained a horse called ‘Victorious Vicky’ and...a few years later he went over to a stud (farm) to look at some horses and this horse started kicking up a fuss and whinnying out. He said ‘What’s wrong with that horse?’ and the guy said ‘Oh, silly bloody thing, I think that’s Victorious Vicky’ and it was, because she had heard Roger’s voice and she wanted his attention. He’s fallen in love with three or four horses in his lifetime and she’s one of them.”

Conversation with breeder Stacey, 2012.

7.1 Introduction

The third part of the racing industry and perhaps the major focus is the training stables. It is from this point that the young horse enters the racing sphere, where both human and horses careers are made or broken. The training stables signify the final phase of liminality for the young thoroughbred, as it enters into fully-fledged acceptance as a racehorse. In this section I assess the use of the term ‘game’ to define racing, drawing on Goffman’s definition as well as noting the motivation of participants across generations (Lemert & Branaman 1997:130). The unstable concept of structure found in the social theory of assemblage is demonstrated through the social and financial relations of the racing community; a community that extends to include both the breeding and auction sectors. In this chapter, I look at actor roles, namely that of the trainers and stable-hands and I identify the presence of joking-relationships with the veterinarian. My focus on the intimacy and investment of the human relationship with the horse in this sector continues to develop the concept of an interspecies kinship, with a specific focus on naming, initiation and personalisation of relations, as well as grieving at the loss of a horse. I note the everyday activities at the racing stable in accordance with both an Actor-Network approach and Kirrilly Thompson’s ‘longitudinal’ view of the human-horse relationship in a working context (2010). The particular roles of human participants are seen in relation to one specific horse over time, as well as the shared activities that form part of the routine leading to one specific race.

7.2 The racing ‘game’

The racing industry has been referred to as a ‘game’ by many informants; an apt description of the training sector, which demonstrates the fickle nature of managing these ‘athletes’ while satisfying the social and financial considerations of their owners. The analogy of the ‘game’ implies a number of different theories on the meaning of the industry for its major participants. The typical representations of

discursively shared understandings of risk define their occupation as having a 50/50 chance of being profitable, yet they are compelled to participate. For the jockey, the social and financial part of gaining rides from the trainer is like a game, in that s/he must play the part expected of them by the trainer. This might include riding-work (exercise riding) a few times for that trainer, demonstrating skills in previous races and drawing the trainer's attention to their ability with his/her particular horse, or having achieved a recent win or placing. According to Goffman, games allow for the demonstration of skills that would otherwise be hidden, to a wider audience including knowledge and mental strengths (Lemert & Branaman 1997: 130). Through racing, the knowledge of the trainer is demonstrated, as are the skills of the riders and jockeys. While the skills relating to the game might be demonstrable, they also include the element of luck, as trainer Henry describes:

"Horses aren't like vehicles. You get a mechanic who can fine-tune a car to one hundred percent. The art of training, you can get them right, but anything can happen."

7.3 Hereditary connections

For many of the participants in this sector, a family background or at least a personal background with horses is commonplace (personal communication with informants: 2011, 2012). The knowledge required to function effectively as a trainer is not something that can be learned by formal means, suggesting a process of enculturation that has as its basis, a passion for the horse. Trainer informant Henry, who followed in the footsteps of his step-father (also a trainer), describes this:

"It was a natural progression to want to train. I have always just loved being around them, riding them. Even though it's a hard job, seven days a week, I suppose it's like dairy farming, but there's a lot more money in dairy farming."

These sentiments are echoed in the words of George, another trainer:

"It must be a passion. The rewards are a basic living, as the good horses come and go. If you are not passionate, it won't work."

Anthropologist Elizabeth Lawrence suggests the merging of human self with the horse is evident in occupations that necessitate strong equine identity (1985:163). This merging of a human lifestyle with the daily life of the horse and all it requires can become all-encompassing; a seven-days-a week job, as described by informants. In this respect, the notion of an informant describes the feeling of many participants in the industry:

“We have the horse-virus; you can’t get away from it, it’s in your blood. No matter how much they cost you, you can’t help it; it’s like an addiction.”

Assistant trainer, Sally further described this notion (paraphrased):

“You see it a lot with horsey people: might say they are sick of it and had enough, want to get out, but they always end up coming back; especially with kids of racing people who have grown up with racing all their lives. They might leave for an O.E., but end up eventually back with the horses.”

7.4 Social and financial relations

7.4.1. The racing community

Trainers in this region generally utilize Riccarton Park racecourse for exercising/training purposes and many of them also rent the stabling facilities there (see illustrations 20 and 21). They might therefore come into regular contact with other trainers and their relations would be typified by both competitiveness and cooperation (Spicer 1999:20).



Illustration 20: Horses from different ‘yards’ await their turn to use the training pool at Riccarton Park



Illustration 21: Shared training tracks at Riccarton Park racecourse

In her ethnography of the American racetrack, sociologist Carol Case identifies the high demands on time placed on the participants in racing, the need for participants to adapt to these high demands and the relative uncertainty of this occupation (1991: 11, 70, 141). Case's account could be amenable to analysis in terms of assemblage, as this research demonstrates. Marcus and Saka identify that a focus on such assemblages demonstrates the high speed of change in modern life, as well as the order and disorder evident in daily life processes (2006: 104). It is due to this disorder and change of modern life that an emergent and unstable concept of structure is required in the social theory of the contemporary world, as we find with assemblage, which replaces outmoded, less dynamic ideas of structure in the social theory of generations past. All these elements are shared within the racing community lending its identity to a community of practice. In light of Jean Lave's 'Situated Learning in Communities of Practice', participation in the racing community involves a dialogical process of identity formation dividing insiders from outsiders (1993). This unspoken dichotomy is represented in the description of an incident that occurred a few years prior to this research and was told by informant Ray:

A horse threw its jockey one Saturday race-meeting. Attempts to catch the horse were in vain and the animal burst through fencing and the hedge surrounding the track, jumping and clearing fences until it reached the main road and was eventually caught at a small strip mall down the road. Ray laughed at the thought of the startled

*shoppers with this large, fully-tacked racehorse in their midst, in a seemingly 'safe' environment.*³⁵

The localised nature of the racing community is demonstrated in the words of owner/breeder informant Clare, who tells of racing her Canterbury-bred and raced horse on the North Island:

"One of our most memorable experiences was with Royal Icon, when he raced in Hawkes Bay. He was an unknown in the north and we felt he was looked down at, with such questions like: "Who is he?" and "Who is he by?" Well he won in very good company and showed everyone who he is. He is our super boy."

In Actor-Network theory, Callon et al. identify 'translation' as the means whereby an actor recognises and organises other actors and components in their connection with each other (1983:193). An important aspect of 'translation' is the identification of shared elements and the relationships that are formed as a result (Ibid). Members of both the racing and breeding sectors are noted as having connections throughout the thoroughbred racing community, through the human-horse assemblages that are constructed. These assemblages are fundamentally animated by the intimacies and investments of the cross-species relationship that makes horse-racing such a convivial social practice. This might include the breeder, owner of the broodmare and owner of the stallion (at a variety of stud-farms), trainer and owner (at a variety of locations including the training stable and race-tracks), as well as stable-hands from both stud-farm and racing stables. These might also include practices such as 'breaking' (teaching the horse to accept riding equipment and human riding instruction), shoeing and the resultant relationships built with the farrier as well as veterinary care. On its most visible level, success by a racehorse on the track reflects the value of its blood relations standing at stud, as well as the human-equine kinship factor; breeders retain ties with trainers that care for young horses after the auction, in order to keep tabs on the horses bred from their stud-farms (personal communication with breeders: 2011, 2012). This shared interest in the horse leads to a social bond between participants that has more of an emotional than financial basis.

³⁵ In this respect, the presence of fences is not an attempt to 'exclude' the general public, rather than attempting to ensure the safety of both those within and outside.

7.4.2 Actor roles

7.4.2.1 Trainers

In the structure of associations that form the assemblage, procedures and relationships define each actor (Marcus & Saka 2006:102). In contrast to the strong distinction in roles and hierarchy at the British and American racing stables described by Rebecca Cassidy, the situation in the Canterbury stables depicts a smaller, closer knit sub-community where the trainer joins in and does his fair share of physical labour (2007). Many of the smaller stables will have few staff, while owner-trainers will do most of the daily care of the horse themselves. Training as a profession in the Canterbury racing community, is marked by participants who are forced to diversify through economic necessity, whether they function in additional roles within the racing industry (thoroughbred and harness racing), or in related businesses. It is however their specificity as trainers, that largely controls their relations with the owners that choose to utilise their services. Owners indicated that they often chose a trainer in accordance with traits that best suited individual horses, for example some horses might enjoy the activity of a large stable, while others might demand the more individualised attention of a smaller yard removed from the training facilities at Riccarton Park (Personal communication with owners: 2012). Jane Smiley quotes trainer Charlie Whittingham: "Owners are like mushrooms. Keep them in the dark and covered with plenty of shit." (2005:88). This reflects the general nature of the trainer and owner relationship, with the trainer employed as an expert horseman, required by the owner to facilitate effective performance in the horses he has invested in. The lack of equine knowledge in most owners is noted by the trainers, who might lose patience with the need for constant explanations as to the status of their 'athlete', while most owners are noted for wanting a quick show for their investment. All trainers interviewed identified the need for effective communication with the owners, but retaining the owners' allegiance requires a balancing act from the trainer, described by trainer George:

You can never tell the owner that they have a bad horse – you have to massage his ego and let him down gently. It does not pay to have an owner with false expectations – cheap horses won't make it, as it's too tough. All horses will reach their maximum level of ability and can't go past that.

7.4.2.2 Stable-hands

Semi-structured interviews with stable hands both at the stables and the race-track revealed that all had some sort of background with horses before deciding to enter their chosen career. Few of them had a family background in the racing industry, but all had the required stable hand license and qualification that allowed them to work in

this field.³⁶ One stable hand stated that it is a way of life; they can't have a social life with friends from outside racing as they are up by 4:30 am and work long hours. She was quick to add that she had no complaints about the long hours as she is doing a job she loves. They will finish by about 11am and then she goes off to exercise her own horses before coming back in the afternoon to see to the racehorses. The heavy physical demands of the job require that she is in bed by 9pm, meaning no social life beyond racing. In the discourse of the stable-hands, this means the interpersonal interactions and leisure activities conducted outside the spatial and temporal domain of work, supporting the idea raised earlier of the merging of a human lifestyle with the daily life of the horse.

The stable hands acknowledged a hierarchy of experience that not only serves to mark status but also dictates the allocation of duties, such that newer recruits (generally less knowledgeable) will be given the easier horses and the more experienced staff will handle the stallions and difficult ones. The trainer acknowledges the expertise of the more experienced staff and their observations of the horses are called upon in making important decisions on the horse's health and welfare.³⁷ According to trainers, there is a fairly high turnover amongst stable staff; most will have come from a Pony Club background, but the long, hard hours demanded within racing is a crucial determinant. While Pony Club serves as a means of enculturating young children (mainly girls) in the daily life requirements ponies and horses, learning how to ride properly and giving a means of competing against other children and ponies, it cannot be used as a complete prerequisite for success in a racing career. This leads to the conclusion that equine passion alone is not enough to support the choice of a career within the racing industry; participants must also have a passion for the racing way of life.³⁸

7.4.2.3 Joking-relationships: the veterinarian

Traditionally noted as a means of limiting conflict between individuals with kinship ties, joking-relationships permit potentially damaging speech between individuals in an unbalanced relationship (Barnard & Spencer 2011: 393). Radcliffe Brown noted that the 'permitted disrespect' of joking-relationships is distinct in a relationship that is basically friendly, but due to the nature of that relationship there opens up the potential for resentment (In Schusky 1972: 61). Eggan highlights the fact that the

³⁶ All stable-hands are required to be licensed as from 2007. In addition, compulsory training is now regulated by NZTR, with testing on levels of competency (NZ Racing website: 2013). The National Certificate in Equine (Stable Procedures), levels 1-4 is encouraged.

³⁷ This was witnessed with a visit from the Vet, in that the stable hand was an important contributor to the conversation. Similarly, conversations with farriers revealed that they gained more insight into a horse's hoof problems by questioning the track rider, rather than the trainer.

³⁸ This idea will be discussed further in relation to the role of women in racing. See Chapter 9.

obligatory joking relationship concerns an inevitable difference of opinion in social situations that necessitate conflict avoidance (In Schusky 1972: 62). In this thesis, I identify the presence of joking-relationships between breeders/trainers and their veterinarians and I question the traditional categorisation of this phenomenon in kinship relations. This is done while seeking to develop an explanation for its presence amongst specific relations of non-kin members of the racing community. In my previous research on thoroughbred breeders and trainers in South Africa, I identified the existence of joking relationships between the trainers and breeders with their particular veterinarian, an aspect which I identified a few times both during participant observation and through interviews in the Canterbury racing industry (Spicer 1998). The joking relationship between these actors exists because of the structural tensions involved in their relationship- each with duties and interests that might conflict with each other, but each also dependent on the other. Veterinarians ensure the health and welfare of the horses, but also function thereby to protect the safety of the human participants. Regulated administering of analgesics requires the presence of the vet in a role that could quite capably be administered by many of the stable staff or the trainer him/herself. The high financial cost of this regulated 'partnership' forces an economic 'alliance' that requires joking to relieve tension. In these instances as with traditional theory identified by Schusky, this trivial joking is essentially paired with respect (1972:61). Trainers willingly acknowledge the important role played by the vet. The vet's presence is also symbolic of the adverse side of animal welfare in that s/he might insist that a horse requires surgery to reach its full potential, or to treat a minor ailment. This negative aspect of training always comes at a high financial price for the owner, yet it is the trainer who must act on behalf of the owner as their agent. This is evident in a conversation with trainer, Gemma:

"They're all so expensive these ones they're more expensive than the doctors. And if your horse has got to have an operation, you might as well book into St George's (human hospital), because it will be more expensive at the vet clinic."

This was reinforced with observations made during a visit to a racing stable for early morning training:

The vet came again to see about a horse that might need surgery on its leg. There was obvious joking with him about finances – the vet gave a Christmas present of two bottles of wine and thanked him (trainer) for his patronage that year, but was jokingly asked if the next two surgeries would be paying for those two bottles of wine.

7.5 Human-horse relations

Multi-species ethnography focusses on the interaction between human and animal, taking into consideration the different features of communication between the species in order to function effectively in their particular roles (Fuentes 2010:611).

Human handlers are accepted into the thoroughbred horse culture through touch (haptic experience). Those unable to touch stay on the periphery; their presence is accepted yet non-essential to the institutional structures of human-horse relations. Actors in the communities of practice constituting the thoroughbred world 'know' the horse through a variety of daily lived experiences.

Anthropologist Kirrilly Thompson draws attention to the process of contextualizing one particular human-equine performance (in her research on the Spanish Corrida), as part of a complexity of routine practices and competitions over time (2010:323). In terms of this longitudinal perspective, one horse may have many encounters with humans while at the racing stables and similarly humans will encounter many different horses. The jockey will exercise ride many horses, but might not ride all of them in the race. Similarly the exercise riders might ride many horses, but never ride any in a race. The stable hand that cares for that particular horse is usually consistent, as trainers recognise the need for continuity of care. However, trainer George complained that there was a fairly high turnover of young female stable hands due to the tough daily requirements of the industry. The rider of the horse might change over time, as the trainer recognises a need for pairing together abilities that best suit the horse at a given time.

7.5.1 Identification through official naming

The anthropology of names and naming is a well-established topic (Bodenhorn and Bruck: 2006). In his book: 'The Savage Mind', Levi-Strauss discusses the categorisation of naming and draws attention to the regulations surrounding the naming of racehorses, pointing to the essential element of unambiguous individualisation (1968: 206). Anthropologist Elizabeth Lawrence contrasts the names of police horses (that are given human names) with the elaborate racehorse names. The human-like names given to police horses reflect their function within human society (Lawrence 1985:123). However, racehorses also function and are essential in the human cultural institution of racing. The registration of an official name is a marker of a horse's transition to the status of an adult racehorse. Owners choose the name, guided by the trainer, or at least the trainer tries to guide them (Personal communication with trainer: 2011). Mares' names need to be cleared both in Australia and New Zealand and all horses must have a twenty year clearance on their name. A strong tradition exists in continuity of naming, whereby some aspect of the sire or dam's names extend into the naming of their progeny (see diagram 1). However as this is a traditional rather than formal convention, some recent names were noted by participants to be 'challenging' the system (Personal communication with trainers, breeders and owners: 2012).

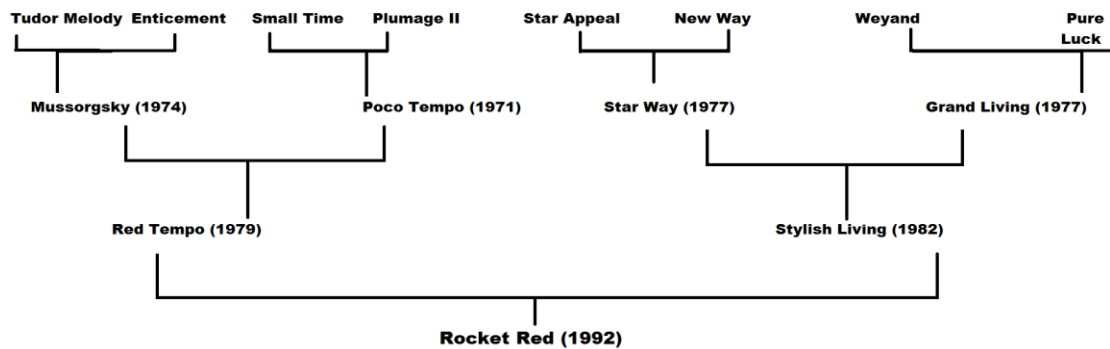


Figure 2: Continuity of naming demonstrated through generations

The continuities of naming within particular bloodlines consist of semantic associations and/or borrowed words. So for example (see Figure 2), in the move from Star Appeal and New Way to Star Way we see continuity through borrowed words, while in the move from Tudor Melody and Enticement to Mussorgsky we find semantic association in that a musical term leads to a composer's name. Rocket Red retains the borrowed 'Red' from his sire, Red Tempo, while the semantic association of 'Rocket' and 'Star' is taken from his Dam-line.

The dual existence of official publicised names as well as humanised or personalised paddock names (the latter shared only by those within the racing community), suggests a stronger emotional attachment by those particular participants. It is this connection with the horse that allows for its function in the daily lives of the participants. In his article on the human-animal relationship with companion animals, Clinton Sanders (2003: 411) draws attention to the daily use of human names which symbolically typify the animal and its unique features. The use of paddock names denotes the individualisation of the racehorse according to their personal connection made with the trainer and his staff (unless they choose to continue the paddock name given by the stud farm). This is noted in a conversation with trainer George who states:

I like giving them a name not a number, as they respond to their name. They are individuals and I like to treat them as such. Sometimes a horse might come in to the stables as a four year old and have no nickname. We give him one very fast, in accordance with his characteristics - we will look at him and say, "Oh he looks like a Charlie." We firmly believe that the horse needs to be referred to by their name as this allows them to feel a sense of belonging and psychological wellbeing. Horses are individuals and have personalities.

Another trainer stated that she had named a filly 'Poppy' due to the fact that she had acquired her on ANZAC day (personal communication with trainer Gemma). Poppies are a symbol of remembrance, worn annually to commemorate the role of the Australia New Zealand Army Corps in the First World War). Associations made through nick-naming, are just as important to the human participants who name the horses, as their official names.

7.5.2 Initiation of the racehorse

Sociologist Audrey Wipper emphasises the element of bonding with a horse in order to facilitate a working partnership, as well as the commonly shared understanding that horses are considered intuitive with regard to discerning human dispositions (2000:49,60). At around the same time that the horse is named, it will be 'broken' to saddle (taught to accept equipment and a human rider); a significant point in the rite of passage from youth to adulthood. By subjecting an animal to human projects and human understandings of those projects, the horse is entangled in a process that blurs and encompasses the distinction within the nature-culture spectrum. When interviewed, George (a trainer) described the method he preferred, stating that he liked to 'join-up' (establish a partnership rather than human dominance) with the horse.³⁹ This is an important part of getting to know the horse and building a bond; that bond was clearly observed at the stables in the manner that the horses acknowledged him and the method in which he communicated with them; the horses participated willingly without the use of force. As Emel and Urbanik describe in their analysis of human-animal interaction, it is the behaviour of the animal and the noises it makes that reveal important connections (in DeMello 2010: 205). This is demonstrated by an excerpt from my fieldnotes:

On that particular occasion, I had arrived at the stable early in the morning to observe the exercise routine. The trainer (George) was busy with menial tasks as well as directing others, checking the list to tell who to ride what. He would take the horse upon return from the track, remove tack and put that away, take the horse up to the tap to hose it down, return it to the stable and scrape off the water, dry its head (all the while communicating with it, with voice and hand gestures), place the sweat rug on it and help track riders with a leg up on other horses in between. With hardly a moment to stand still, he walked past a horse after it had exercised (the horse was waiting in the stall for a human to come and take the tack off). He had to quickly do something else and so as he walked past, the horse motioned to him (shaking its head). He called to it stating that he just had to see to something quickly and would get the saddle off soon, and the horse shook its head and blew through its nostrils in response.

³⁹ 'Join-up' is a method of natural horsemanship that stresses partnership, rather than human dominance.

The trainer must facilitate a balance between training the horse to win and ensuring that the horse does not break-down with injury in the process. This uncertainty is reflective of the strength of the nature-element; its presence might be shaped by the human culture that is racing, but training methods and human intervention can never fully control nature. Gelding or castration is an accepted cultural practice that may be carried out as a means of human control over natural inclinations that hinder a horse's effective racing career. Clutton-Brock claims that this practice enables the strengthening of the human-animal bond (1994:32). This implies that a horse without hormonal 'interference' has greater acceptance of humans. Similarly a frequently reported common understanding on the unpredictability and fickle nature of mares when in season makes them more difficult to race. This has been stated as a reason why colts are more popular to race, despite the fact that fillies tend to be faster. Human cultural methods at controlling the natural phenomenon of filly-cycles in the form of drugs, is currently prohibited in New Zealand racing despite claims by some that it should be allowed (personal communication with informants: 2012). Scientific evidence suggests that hormonal therapy in horses has only a restricted period of success, before it becomes obsolete in the filly's system, re-emphasizing the fact that nature remains elusive to cultural constraints.

7.5.3 Human routines transferred onto the horses

Daily human-horse interaction at the training stables is highly routinized in that human participants follow a set of practices that share a general time-frame; exercising the horses early in the morning, enabling the horses to have 'down-time' during the day and then returning them to their stables early in the evening. Race-day routines might vary slightly, depending on the location of the race-meeting. Carol Case suggests that the understanding that horses need routine supports the elaboration of ritual-like practices in their care (1991). In terms of human-horse interaction, Clinton Sanders equates the expectations of routine as a shared culture that is mutually understood despite the lack of communicated language (2003:411). Aspects of practices for horse care and training are commonly understood without being explicitly verbally communicated. This is evident in the horse's general acceptance of the daily exercise routine and the occasional race day ritual and supports the idea that trainers learn to conduct their practice in a commonly accepted way. During participant observation at the race-track, I noticed this theory in practice. Horses are taught to urinate to the sound of human whistling, to enable their handlers to easily obtain urine samples for routine testing by racecourse officials and external auditors. This hidden aspect of human-horse relations was observed in the swabbing stables, where the race-winner was led in order to obtain a sample for testing.

Mundane tasks such as grooming and mucking⁴⁰ have often been stated as essential bonding mechanisms at entry level riding schools. Indeed, many participants claimed that the role with the strongest bond between human and horse is that of the stable-hand. However, the trainer is also equated with a strong equine bond; this connection is better understood through observations of trainers at work, leading to the opinion that many trainers in the Canterbury region are very ‘hands-on’ in their caretaking of these animals compared to accounts in other racing ethnographies (Case: 1991 and Cassidy: 2007), as well as my own observations of the South African racing system. Grooming the horses is an important daily activity at the racing stables and functions on a number of different levels. Mary Midkiff states that grooming is a central social act with significance for engendering intimacy (2001:193). This sentiment is echoed by Stephen Budiansky, who draws a parallel with the instinctive practice of grooming a favoured horse in the wild herd (1997:71). Grooming the horse is an essential part of aesthetic presentation; that which is culturally prescribed, yet it also reinforces the partnership of humans and horses. Grooming effectively enables the horse to be reassured of its value and acceptance within the ‘herd’ established by humans.

7.5.4 Personalisation of relations

Juliet Clutton-Brock points to the fact that individualisation of animals is lost when numbers are large (1989:33, 34). Birke and Brandt support this theory in their notion of racehorse keeping as a productive practice (2009:191). Data that I obtained from the particular category of owner-trainers supports this in practice. They were all able to describe their horses’ characteristics in detail, mentioning personal elements of each one and describing a bond with their equines that functions as an extension of kinship. When questioned about their favourites, all participants were quick to respond with names, stating particular personality traits in that particular horse that drew them to it. The presence of ‘heart’, a characteristic that is highly regarded in the equine world, is noted by many participants as a determining element for choosing a favourite and the strong tendency to anthropomorphise their horse was evident. This is depicted in a conversation with owner-trainer Henry:

“They’re all just so different. He’s dominant, the other one holds back. That ones the first to the feed out in the paddock, he’ll just push through. They’re just like kids. An example, years ago we had a few horses in the paddock. My cousin sent us a horse from a big stable where he was dominant over about twenty horses. Well we put these two together and cousin’s horse went over to our horse and just swung his bum around and put up his leg as if to say ‘get back or I’ll kick you’. My horse just sat back, and after about 5 seconds he moved as if to say, ‘You bastard’ and he just up and chased him round and round the paddock. The other horse was too quick for

⁴⁰ Manure removal

him, but he would have hurt him. I was just surprised – I wouldn't have thought that, but he just wasn't going to be dominated in his own paddock. He was the boss. They're quite funny; they're quite humorous at times."

Trainer George (who is noted as having a much larger stable of horses) however stated that he did not have favourites and all his horses were treated the same otherwise they would pick it up and not cooperate fully. Donna Haraway draws attention to the abilities of perceptiveness, technique and self-discipline necessary for the human trainer in order to function effectively in a human-animal partnership (2008: 223). Knowing each horse's abilities is an important part of the trainer's function. Keeping horses in such a way that a degree of their wild behaviour as social herd animals is permitted, is an essential element to achieving success with these animals, as George describes:

It is important for the trainer to watch the horse's ability and to not work them out of their class. Horses don't like to be beaten on track-work; it affects the confidence of the horse and they get put off – it's all part of the herd instinct and the trainer needs to take this into account. I give instructions to the exercise riders as to which horse needs to 'win' in training.

7.5.5 Bonds of fictive-kinship

In my analysis of the Canterbury thoroughbred racing community, I have identified the close bonds that exist between humans and particular horses, likening this to a pseudo-kinship or category of fictive-kinship whereby humans 'adopt' the horse into their family. Anthropological theory includes slaves from certain societies in this category (Schusky 1972: 8). In his description of kinship, Sahlins deduces a number of elements used to identify kinship bonds, that include shared residence, shared experiences, daily working together, an emotional connection and shared distress (2011a: 5). It is generally the owner-trainers who live on the same premises as their horses, caring for the horses themselves and building a connection with the horse that surpasses a typical human-animal bond. Schusky states that acknowledgement of specific kinship relations establishes a form of status to the connection (1972: 1). Human participants will follow with interest the 'rites of passage' of particular horses that they have had contact with, since claiming ties with that particular horse and its success thereby gleans status. As previously described in the Stud farm sector, strong attachments are made between human participants and particular horses, to the extent that the humans are often unable to part with these horses, despite the financial burden that this causes. This inability to pass on responsibility for an animal which they regard as their own, equates with a bond of fictive-kinship and is similarly demonstrated in the sharing of life-processes identified by Sahlins (2011b:230). The close emotional bonds that are established between participants in this sector and

their favourite horses are emphasised with the death of the horse. Rebecca Cassidy equates the death of a horse with that of a human, in that grooms are both permitted and expected to grieve (2002b: 40). This blurring of the human-animal boundary extends beyond the financial value of the horse, effort and finances invested in that horse's career. During a conversation with informant Gemma, she spoke about one of her horses that she had lost:

“One I had, also was in a race and he broke a front leg. The vet said no way was there that they could save him because the bone was almost coming through the leg and so I had to have him put down. It is very hard, very, very hard. Your expectations and you're attached to the horse. I think everyone feels that.”

The strong emotional bond that is created between human and horse in the racing sector is evident in the ways in which participants talk about their grief at the loss of a horse. Owner-trainer Henry describes his emotions:

“It's quite devastating when you lose a horse. I lost a horse in the steeplechase at Riccarton. When your horse goes over the jump properly, you're proud because you've trained him properly and then he goes down. It's quite emotional when you've trained this horse and then you lose him.”

The kinship obligations associated with burying their horse rather than the easier option of having them sent to the pet-food industry, suggests the nature of human responsibility. Some informants spoke of the difficulties in obtaining council consent to bury a horse at the stables if they so wished. Many trainers can't afford this luxury since they have only a set number of stables/paddocks, and those are often earmarked for new horses waiting to come in to training. Breeders generally have more space in which to bury their horses; they also spend a lot longer with the horse living daily with them over a number of years. One breeder mentioned that a local trainer had asked to bury a horse on their stud-farm, planting a tree on the grave. Another informant told of planting a row of trees for a favourite horse when its career took off and it left to race overseas.



Illustration 22: This memorial/gravestone to the racehorse Show Gate can be found at Riccarton Park racecourse.

7.6 Summary

Horse husbandry as a naturalcultural practice is noted through an analysis of the training sector, drawing into the final liminal phase of the young thoroughbred horse as it is transformed into a fully-fledged racehorse. The training sector perhaps best depicts the common notion of racing as a 'game'; playing the delicate balance of social and financial investment against the fragile nature of the thoroughbred. The strong draw of the industry is also acknowledged across generations and time with the focus on the training stables as part of a community of practice within the industry. Relationships between the social actors in this sector are analysed and importance is given to the presence of joking relationships as a manifestation of the structural tensions in the social and economic ties between specific participants. I have drawn attention to the significance of naming and grieving as a means to establish that the bond between human and horse is one of fictive-kinship. Human intervention in the life of the racehorse is still acknowledged for social and financial gain, yet the strong emphasis on an emotional connection remains. In the following chapter, I continue with the role of the training sector in the showcase of the race, drawing on further human participants who have contact with the racehorse only in this context. Through an analysis of the race, I connect the focal point of the horse in its longitudinal context, in that preparation for the race is seen within the background of the breeding and training sectors.

Chapter Eight: The racecourse

“The (other) good thing about mixing with people at the races is that you’re mixing with optimists...because good things are just around the corner all the time, so it makes you feel good.”

Conversation with owner Mary, 2012

8.1 Introduction

An analysis of the racecourse draws again on the sense of an equine racing community and the dichotomy of insiders and outsiders identified both in the breeding sector and at the auction. The race-day allows for what Cassidy (2002), Fox (2005) and Kuiper (2009: 38) identify as an ‘escape’ into the ‘other world’ of thoroughbred horse racing. This ‘world’ of the racing industry is usually kept in check from the general public, both by fences, gates and health and safety restrictions. I maintain that full inclusion into the racing community is restricted through the regulated access allowing only specific humans to ‘touch’ the horse; a simple feature that has strong social and financial undertones. I draw on the suggestion of Kate Fox through an analysis of the jockey and apprentice participant group as a sub-culture, noting the balance of emotional attachment with social and financial factors within that group (for an ethnographic case study of occupational sub-culture amongst animal workers, see Locke 2007) (Fox 2005). I also draw on the isopraxis phenomenon⁴¹ or centaur imagery used by Kirrilly Thompson in her analysis of the horse-rider relationship in the Spanish mounted bullfight, with the emphasis on a oneness of being in the rider-horse relationship⁴² (Haraway 2008: 229), (Thompson 2010). Having discussed the roles of trainers and stable hands in the previous chapter (chapter 4), I draw on their relations to a lesser extent in this context. I use sociologist Carol Case’s categorisation of supplementary participants in order to analyse the roles and relationships of the jockeys and apprentices, veterinarians, racing officials and owners (1991). These roles are noted within the motivational aspects identified in this research, namely social and financial aspirations and equine attachment. Spectators and punters are analysed as additional participants in accordance with the notion that they are not an essential part of the primary (expert) racing community, as they are unable to ‘touch’ the horse. Goffman’s theory of role distance is used to demonstrate how this sense of ‘exclusion’ functions in attempts to be identified as ‘belonging’ to the equine or racing community (1997:38). Using

⁴¹ Also known as ‘reciprocal induction’; this theory suggests a unity of movement between human and animal bodies.

⁴² In a similar analysis, Locke’s discussion of mahout-elephant relations talks about mutual attunement in terms of bodily comportment and mutual understanding, taking a phenomenological approach, drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s idea of body-schema, and a phenomenological reading of Bourdieu’s habitus.

Moore and Myerhoff's analysis of rituals, I draw on concepts of the race day ritual identified in the works of both Rebecca Cassidy and Kate Fox (Moore & Myerhoff 1977), (Cassidy 2002), (Fox 2005). Koenraad Kuiper's call for an analysis of the race is used in conjunction with his interpretation of the race meeting (2004, 2009). Relations between participants are analysed in terms of the three elements he identifies, namely competition, pageantry and risk taking (the latter aspect which will be analysed in the following chapter).

New Zealand currently has fifty one racetracks, operating around 328 races each year (NZTR factbook 2012:7). Over thirty seven million dollars in prize money was paid out to the leading horses in a pool of 5794 horses (Ibid). Riccarton Park racecourse is noted for holding eight of the twenty national race records, most of which were set since the year 2000 (Ibid:29). As such, Riccarton Park racecourse remains one of the foremost race-tracks in New Zealand. Motukarara Race-course is noted as a shared country track, being used only a couple of times a year for thoroughbred meetings as well as for harness racing.

8.2 Symbolism of the racecourse

The racecourse symbolises a type of 'judgement day' for owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys and the young horse, when years of speculation can be tested (Spicer 1998: 2). For those tied to the older horse, it can signify the event which makes or breaks the horse's career. It is the epitome of 'the game' (see previous chapter) referred to by many informants, due to its unpredictability. The racetrack has been noted as a means of escape from mundane life in that the ordinary lives of the spectators are suspended within the 'other-world'; usually a green-belt within suburban city life (Cassidy 2002: 85). Both Kuiper and Fox describe this as an 'alternative reality' or a 'liminal world' with its own set of norms and values (Kuiper 2009:38), (Fox 2005: 21, 22). Kuiper establishes the racecourse as a 'carnival' and uses Turner's concept of 'ritual anti-structure' to explain the draw for participants (2009:38), (Turner 1969). As such, it is an outlet where focus is on the beauty and ability of nature (the horse), the potential to win money and the seeming grandeur of traditions, all of which combine as an escape from the harsh realities of life. The public are given the opportunity to wager instead on the jockey and horse, who take the risk in the race. The unpleasant aspects of city life symbolised in the stark concrete jungle is contrasted with the perfectly landscaped gardens and grassed track, beautiful thoroughbreds, architecturally aesthetic buildings and clean facilities of Riccarton Park.⁴³

⁴³ It is noted that not all racecourses are constructed in this manner. Aqueduct Racecourse in New York is a direct contrast; as a winter facility, it has little aesthetic appeal.

The stratification identified by British anthropologists draws on traditional hierarchies within that society and is not completely manifest within New Zealand racing tradition (Cassidy 2002, Fox 2005). Rebecca Cassidy identifies the paddock (birdcage) as a restricted area within a general public area (2002: 56). Guards in the form of barrier assistants stand as gate-keepers, but when questioned about the nature of their roles, they stated that their main focus was to prevent children from entering an area deemed high risk due to the presence of the horses. Although there are segregated facilities for specific participant groups, these are largely divided into those who hold a license to practice their occupation at the track, and those who don't⁴⁴. Barriers restricting the movement of the general public are not seen as an attempt at exclusion, but rather as a means of protection in an industry that is beleaguered by health and safety regulations. As Carol Case notes, the thoroughbred remains the focus of the racetrack (1991: 63). The barriers exist largely as a reminder that the horse, although domesticated, still retains that element of 'wild' and as such can be highly dangerous (see illustration 23). In addition, this spatial segregation is relevant to ideas of 'belonging'. An old saying in American racing states: 'You think those fences are to keep people out? Well buddy, they're to keep us in,' (Helm 1991: 261). This refers to racing as an occupation that continues through generations of racing families and the emotional bond that it holds over its participants, as discussed in the previous chapter on the training stables.

8.2.1 'Touching' the horse: the defining element of inclusion

In their research into the human-horse relationship, Lynda Birke and Keri Brandt (2009: 195) note the important role played by the horse within equine communities, in that it creates almost an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy (between horse people and non-horse people). In the assemblages created around each thoroughbred, separation from non-actors is maintained through both implicit and explicit regulations concerning human physical contact with the horse. Anthropologist Elizabeth Lawrence notes the non-aggressive, approachable nature of police horses, stating that the general public are allowed to stroke them (1985: 120). This is a direct contrast to the thoroughbred racehorse, which she depicts as 'inaccessible'. The ability to 'touch' the horse, care for and control them (whether this is in the form of a stable hand, veterinarian, steward, trainer or jockey) denotes membership of the racing community. This highlights the ambiguity of the owner; their presence is accepted due to the financial necessity for their participation, yet they do not (or rarely) 'touch' the horse. Owners who are already members of the greater equine community, can gain certification in order that they can assist in caring physically for the horse, but many restrict themselves to patting their horse in the birdcage after a win, or at the stables (personal communication with owner: 2011). This excludes them in terms of shared knowledge and understanding of equine practices.

⁴⁴ Licenses are granted by New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing, the governing authority.



Illustration 23: Barriers exist to protect the general public and ensure the safety of horses and handlers (photo used with permission from Gabrielle Holdorf).

8.3 Primary participants

8.3.1 Jockeys and apprentices

Kate Fox identifies jockeys as a subculture within the racing industry, drawing on the element of shared risk and lifestyle as cohesive factors (2005). Whether they have a background with pony-club or have never ridden before they have their first ride on the stable 'pony'⁴⁵, jockeys and apprentices need to like horses in order to function effectively in their role. Most jockeys claim a family background with racing or horses, although there are a few whom the 'game' itself has chosen due to their small stature and competitive nature (personal communication with jockeys: 2011, 2012). James, a stipendiary steward, explained that in order for apprentice jockeys to become fully-fledged professionals, they need to be focussed and have a talent for race riding; this is distinguished from equestrian sports in that not all riders have that ability on the track.

The jockey occupation can also be seen as a subculture in that theirs is a marginalised occupation with many sacrifices necessitated (Abrahamson & Modzelewski 2011:147). Jockeys and apprentices interviewed generally downplayed the dietary sacrifices that they make, although observation at the apprentice

⁴⁵ Denotes a quiet thoroughbred at the racing stable. This is a somewhat derogatory reference since 'pony' generally symbolises a child's mount.

school noted an apprentice who found himself on the scales about five times a day (personal observation 2012). Jockeys did not claim to socialize with their fellow competitors, yet the geographic nature of the South Island racing calendar allows for ties to be formed through car-pooling to further venues. Older, experienced jockeys have given of their time and knowledge to assist at the apprentice school in a mentoring-type role and some of these jockeys stated that occasionally a trainer will ask them to give casual advice to their apprentice during exercise riding (personal communication with jockeys: 2012). Jockeys and officials interviewed also claimed that there is more camaraderie on the South Island due to the nature of racing on a smaller financial, organizational, and social scale, as apprentice jockey Jessica states:

“An older jockey made a speech recently and he said, ‘You know that if you make it big on the North Island or in Australia, you make lots of money. If you make it big as a jockey on the South Island, you can buy a bottle of milk.’ I guess being a jockey here though is a lot easier as nobody’s out to get you.”

8.3.1.1 Relations with other human actors

The sense of unity between members of the racing community in the Canterbury region is evident in the manner in which participants refer to other participants on a first name basis, speak the language of the racetrack (which includes a knowledge and understanding of prominent bloodlines) and focus on the horse as the centre of their interest (Keaveney 2005:452). This notion is supported by observations at the jockey apprentice school, as noted in my fieldwork diary:

Reviews of recorded race footage show that the stipendiary steward and apprentices are able to identify trainers by the jockey silks worn. The symbolism of the silks in its colours and patterns is a language open to those willing to learn, but immediate identification in a scenario that would normally be difficult to spot who’s who (for the novice, telling who is riding by identifying 1 from 12 others, would be extremely difficult). This also suggests that everybody in the game knows the other ‘players’, it is a community.

Participants in the industry are well-aware that none of them has an occupation that surpasses the others in importance. This was acknowledged in conversations with different industry participants, from stipendiary stewards, farriers and trainers, to jockeys and is emulated in the words of jockey Sam:

“A bloke actually said to me once, ‘To make a horse win a race, it takes ten people. There’s the trainer’s got to do his job right, the blacksmith’s got to do his job right, Vet’s got to do his job right, Jockeys got to do his job right and if one hasn’t done his job right the other one can’t do theirs right. That’s how it all sort of gels itself into place.”

Sociologist Carol Case identifies the clash of expectations concerning the professional relationship between jockey and trainer since jockeys are meant to try to win, but are also expected to ride according to the trainer's instructions (1984:279). This implies a critical, intuitive challenge for the jockey during the race. In terms of striving towards a 'oneness' of movement with the horse, an aspect which will be discussed further in this chapter, apprentice jockeys are seen as undergoing a liminal phase towards achieving full status as a jockey. Apprentices start at entry level in the training stables, working as stable hands doing physical labour and tending to the horses (Tollich 1995:104). In conjunction with these duties, the apprentice will also start honing their riding skills, exercise riding for their patron-trainer as well as attempting to solicit rides from other trainers when it does not clash with those of their own stable (Ibid). Apprentices are clearly noted at Riccarton Park racecourse when not riding in a race; they generally perform duties of a stable-hand preparing the horse in the stables and leading them to the birdcage for the jockey to mount. Their beginner status is noted by the trainer, who generally won't put them on young horses or ones known to be dangerous. Due to their age, they need to prove their credibility (Conversations with apprentice jockeys: 2012). Similarly, apprentices might be more verbally abused by seasoned jockeys during the race, but this is noted as an attempt to 'psych-out' the opponent; apprentices have the advantage of weight allowances, which are lost in ratio to their racing success (Conversation with apprentice Jessica: 2012).

In his analysis of apprentice jockeys in New Zealand, sociologist Martin Tollich notes that it is not purely a noteworthy ability as a race rider that gains the potentially winning ride; it is the social skills and networking ability of successful jockeys which gains the trainer's attention (1996: 52). Jockey Sam reinforces this idea with his description of supplementary skills necessary in a successful jockey:

"Patience, good social skills, you need to be able to talk to people. You have to relate to a broad spectrum of people, from trainers, owners, punters who might be talking to you or people you run into, you do have to have good people skills."

On the South Island, some jockeys are contracted to specific stables, although they retain a certain amount of freedom to solicit additional rides from other trainers. Successful jockeys might get offered a few rides in a particular race and have to decide which is the best one; this might not be the best horse, but rather loyalty towards a certain trainer who provides that jockey with numerous rides (Communication with Jockey Sam: 2012). On the other side, it can be difficult for the apprentice to break in to this socio-economic network of jockeys and trainers. All apprentices are constantly encouraged by apprentice school instructors to call up trainers and ask for the opportunity to ride, but the difficulties in getting noticed are demonstrated in the case of apprentice George:

At a session of the apprentice school, George stated that he was planning on asking to borrow successful jockey John Smith's cell-phone, in order that he could phone a few trainers. He was tired of having his calls to trainers unanswered and was sure that they would accept a call from the more prominent jockey's phone.

Trainers have a working relationship with jockeys, controlled by the largely transitory nature of the jockey occupation in conjunction with the intricate social and financial factors that regulate their relationship. Trainers will choose the best jockey for the horse; whether that is a seasoned rider who is on form at the time or a promising apprentice who has the benefit of a weight allowance. Canterbury trainers generally display loyalty towards those who ride work⁴⁶ for them, and will ensure that they always get at least one ride, especially those who ride work on the young horses. However, the trainer retains a responsibility towards the owners to win and cannot guarantee too many chances for the jockey if s/he is not good enough. There is not a big pool of jockeys in Canterbury and with the establishing of big satellite stables from the North Island, some of the top jockeys are coming down to ride for them, making themselves available for rides in other races at those meetings.

Jockeys have little contact with owners; their work with the training stables is conducted very early in the morning and does not allow for communication with owners. They might exchange a few words in the bird-cage after a successful race, but the owner rarely gives the trainer input as to which jockey they would like to ride their horse. The knowledgeable decision as to which jockey best suits their horse, is left entirely up to the trainer's intuition (personal communication with trainers and owners: 2011, 2012).

8.3.1.2 Jockey-horse relations

The relationship between the jockey and horse is a highly individualised connection. The economic aspect of this occupation requires numerous horses to be ridden daily, of which a select few will be ridden by him/her at the races in addition to rides for other trainers. Jockeys might have to ride a horse in the race that they have never ridden before and yet still win, which indicates that it is not necessary to have a prior association with individual horses in order to succeed. It is a learned ability as a rider that allows the jockey this capability, with some being more successful at it than others (personal communication with jockey Andy: 2011). There is however a necessity for the jockey to elicit trust from the horse; the jockey will ask the horse to make choices that often go against its natural instinct to run away, as jockey Andy relates:

⁴⁶ Track riders who exercise ride for the trainers. Some also hold a jockey's license and are eligible to ride in races.

“The horse is in charge really, the horse is the boss. My 50 odd kilos isn’t going to be able to overpower a 500 some kilo horse. The big thing is knowing how to read the horse, how it is doing on the day and work with it.”

In their review of the human-horse relationship, Hausberger et al. refer to the various characteristics of horses in relation to human personalities and that this remains a factor in terms of success (2008:10). Jockey Andy relates this notion of human-horse shared characteristics to the connection horses have with their trainers:

“A lot of horses are like their trainers and if you don’t get on with a certain person for whatever reason, you won’t get along with their horses. It’s a very hard one to explain, but there’s no doubt that there’s some trainers that you gel with and others you don’t. Some might be a great trainer and for some reason when you ride their horses, it just doesn’t seem to happen. And that happens with all riders, gel with certain people more than others. It’s a real funny one – the psyche in it. It comes down to the respect that people are given, if people respect you and take what you say on board in the right way, but some people sort of don’t want to take on any help – they ask for your opinion and then they don’t take it. ..definitely a flow on with the horses.”

All the jockeys and apprentices interviewed were quick to name their favourite horse and as jockey Andy relates, this emotional attachment is not necessarily related to success:

“You do get your favourites and they might not necessarily be the best horses you have ridden, they might be average and won a few but tried very hard. You get likings for horses like that. Often the ones that are very good aren’t that genuine. The one that isn’t quite as good but tries harder is really a better racehorse.”

Jockey Sam supports the notion of equine attachment:

“It’s a lot more rewarding when you see their efforts, you know wins come and go, rides come and go and you forget about them, but you do see the rewards of a horse that is learning.”

8.3.1.2.1 The Centaur relationship

Donna Haraway draws on the isopraxis phenomenon as a natural/cultural exercise, whereby human and animal are joined and become something completely unique (2008:228,229). This concept describes the ideal of a unity of movement that is so finely attuned towards achieving a desired goal that it produces a ‘oneness’ of being. In her analysis of the Spanish mounted bullfight, anthropologist Kyrilly Thompson describes the specific nature of this phenomenon in human-horse relations by using the symbolism of the Centaur (2010: 323). This mythological Greek character fused the upper body of a human with the body of a horse and claimed origins with the

Greek Gods (Nash 1984:273). Scholarly interpretations suggest a combination of both human characteristics with the desired qualities in the horse, such as physical strength (Ibid: 274). This concept is supported in theory by Kate Fox who speaks of jockey skill in terms of a 'fusion' of human and horse (2005:188,189). Popular discourse on equestrianism attributes a sacred element to riding; a spiritual nature of sharing physical energy (Keaveney 2005, Midkiff 2001). This symbolic combination is characterised in the attunement of jockey skill with horse thought and physical ability. Jockeys have chosen a career with horses and become immersed in the horse world once they begin as apprentices. The ultimate rider is symbolised as the centaur, depicting a fusion of human and horse so that they become one in the race. This jockey and horse combination (the centaur) represents a blurring of boundaries (Thompson 2011:233); imagery which is supported by apprentice jockey Jessica, who states:

"I wish I was one (a horse). Best thing you can have in the whole world. I just seem to get along with them, it's natural. It just seems so easy compared to other things in the world."

This 'centaurability' is not a given once achieved, but something that jockeys need to constantly work at (Thompson 2010:323). Jessica reiterates this notion:

"You feel as if when you're on, you don't have a safety belt. You have days that you get on the horse and you don't feel all there. You ride horses every day and you're not going to feel the same every day. Some days you're real confident with horses and some days you're just not very well. Today I've had a bad day with horses – I think I rode nine horses all up and I'm very tired and I haven't had much time off lately so the horses aren't working out very well for me because I'm tired and they pick that up. Yes, I even had one bolt on me and it wasn't much fun."

The centaur imagery is clearly reflected in a mutual identity of horse and rider that highlights the absence of one within the specific context that their identity is joined (the race) (Thompson 2010:330). In this respect, the displacement of a jockey from his/her horse during the race is viewed with horror by the crowds, not only because of the potential risk of serious physical injury to the jockey, but because of the interruption to the cultural image of the expert horseman fused with his/her mount; a break in the harmonious connection of the centaur ideal.



Illustration 24: Separation of jockey from horse through a fall: a break in the centaur image.

In her particular context, Haraway uses this concept of shared embodied practice to define the human-animal partnership in dog trials. This has significance for human-horse relations as it implies that this 'oneness' does not necessarily denote riding or even specifically the best rider. Attaining this 'oneness of thought' or mutual attunement, remains an ideal that is essentially identified in the fact that not all apprentice jockeys (or jockeys) will achieve success. The factor of 'purpose' is identified as an important shared element between rider and horse for successful attunement, and is noted in a conversation with racing official Graham (who officiates over the jockey apprentices):

"Not all apprentices make it. They have to be focussed and must have a talent for race-riding. Not all good equestrians make good race riders."

8.4 Supplementary participants

In her research on the American racing backstretch, sociologist Carol Case categorises veterinarians (and farriers), racing officials and owners as 'supplementary' in that they are essential members of the racing community, but secondary to the primary role players of jockey, trainer and stable hand (1991: 42). In terms of their connection with the horses, it is only the owners who might not have daily contact and therefore their role is seen in a different context to the other participants.

8.4.1 Veterinarians

On race day, the official veterinarians are responsible for ensuring that the horses running in each race are physically competent as they lead up to the start of the race, as well as for regulated testing of urine and/or blood samples of winning horses of each race in the swabbing stables (observations at race-meetings: 2011) (see illustrations 25 and 26). The vet has the right to scratch a horse (remove from the race) and does this usually in conjunction with information gained from the jockey after the warm-up gallop to the start. The most common scenario for scratching a horse comes when one 'acts up' in the starting gates and gets caught or kicks its leg badly. Even a minor scratch can affect the horse's temperament at the time of the race and an overly excited horse will not perform adequately. The vet, in taking responsibility for scratching that horse, is protecting all participants; the jockey still gets paid, the punters get their money back and the owner and trainer are saved the embarrassment of their horse coming last (personal communication with jockey: 2011). Occasionally a horse will be euthanized, a decision made by the vet in conjunction with the trainer and owner. Such occasions are marked by gravity and given due respect, as described by jockey informant Andy:

"Nobody wants to see a horse having to be put down. At Motukarara, a horse broke its leg right in front of the grandstand – unfortunately that can happen at any time. A horse can be fully sound, but for no apparent reason suddenly breaks his leg. They're pretty fragile really. They've only got to put their foot in a little hole. Injury is not nice to see, but unfortunately its part of the game. Especially for the public if there are kids, but they do their best, they put a shelter up. That's one of the sad things about racing, injuries occur. Everyone does their best to prevent them."



Illustration 25: A race-course vet observes horses in the parade ring before the race.



Illustration 26: The winning horse enters the swabbing stables under the direction of a race course vet.

8.4.2 Farriers

Each training stable will have their own contracted farrier who sees to the care and shoeing of the horses' hooves. This is usually done at the stables on a regulated time-frame and on non-racing days. Farriers rely heavily on information given by those caring for the horses, specifically the track-riders/jockeys, in order to gain a full picture of the state of the horse's hooves (personal communication with farrier: 2011). On specific race-days however, the official farrier for the race-meeting is on-call to re-shoe any horse that requires assistance before the race.

8.4.3 Racecourse officials

8.4.3.1 Stipendiary stewards

In her analysis of the British racecourse, anthropologist Kate Fox (2005:63) classifies racing officials as 'elders and chiefs' in that their presence demands the respect of other participants. Traditionally appointed from the upper classes of society, they

were selected or hand-picked largely due to socio-economic background. Modern stipendiary stewards are employed by the Racing Integrity Unit and cover all three disciplines of gallops/steeplechase, harness racing and greyhound racing. They must have a background in at least one of these disciplines in order to function according to the norms of racing. Participant observation with these officials on a particular race day revealed that many of these stewards had formerly practiced as harness racing drivers or jockeys. They function primarily to represent the integrity within racing; their role is to examine the participants' actions and as writer/punter Mike Helm (1991: 224) states: 'They aren't paid to assume the best about human nature.' Their judgement is final. This element was noted during participant observation in the stipendiary stewards' room during a race meeting, where an apprentice jockey was called in for an inquiry after a race and his demeanour reflected that of a chastised schoolboy. Interviews with jockeys suggested that it is no longer a hierarchical relationship, in that stewards attempt to work with the jockeys in resolving problems. Jockey informant Andy pointed to a less visible yet essential role of the stewards in protecting the welfare of the racehorses:

"If they see a horse that isn't conditioned properly at the races, they make the trainer come in, pull the trainer into line. If a horse is consistently running at the back of the field, pulling 100 yards, well they'll take him down into their room and talk to him about the horse."

8.4.3.2 Technicians

The photo-finish technicians and official time-keepers function behind the scenes and as such might seem part of an exclusive group inaccessible to the general public. Despite their seemingly distant quarters high up above the main stands, they are accessible only if the correct norms for behaviour are followed; during participant observation with the stipendiary stewards I was invited to bring visitors in future, as they strongly supported the notion of showing the public that there was no trickery with race results. In these quarters, there is a focus on communication between racing officials. This starts with the signal given to allow the starter to proceed with the start and includes inquiries into jockey behaviour noted by the stipendiary stewards. Communication between these participants in each race comes to a conclusion with acknowledgement of the results captured by the technicians on camera and officially accepted by the judges. No single official controls the race; it is a shared responsibility.

8.4.3.3 Clerks of the course

The combination of tameness and wildness evident in the racehorse, has been noted by various researchers, who draw on the element of wildness demonstrated in the

controlled racehorse that is deemed acceptable (Fox: 2005, Birke & Brandt: 2009). This reveals a tension between control and autonomy evident both in the form of the racehorse and the structure of the race. The tolerable element of 'wildness' remains purely that ability to race and the will to be the leader of the herd. Other elements of 'wildness' are not encouraged, such as bucking, shying and bolting in the wrong direction⁴⁷. The essence of the natureculture balance is highly visible in the form of the traditional grey horses ridden by the clerks of the course. These well-schooled horses display the epitome of culture in the controlled manner in which they assist their riders to direct, lead and catch the 'wilder' racehorses on the track (see illustration 27). Their controlled canter/gallop following the race is strongly contrasted with the wild gallop of the preceding racehorses. In his analysis of the races, linguist Koenraad Kuiper identifies the clothing and duties of the clerks of the course as an important part of the race-day pageantry that makes it so appealing as a type of 'alternative reality' (2009:31). They also function in an important role as guardians of racetrack norms, guiding both jockeys and horses.



Illustration 27: Grey horses ridden by the clerks of the course demonstrate control within the 'wild' racehorses.

⁴⁷ This was vividly portrayed in a race-meeting where a horse acted up at the gates, threw its jockey and bolted halfway around the track before it was cornered by the clerk of the course. It then proceeded to elude capture by the clerk, to the extent of even unseating the clerk (a symbol of the highly experienced horseman), before a second clerk was able to assist in cornering him. He proceeded to bolt again, until he was finally caught at the other side of the track. Ironically, his name was 'Not Court' (Observed on Trackside television. Waterlea races on 26 April, 2012).

8.4.4 Owners

Owners are noted as essential players in the racing game for one specific aspect, their financial input. Although some owners might have an equine-related background and understand the quirks of the racehorse, most are noted as both socially and financially drawn to the industry through either notions of grandeur or novel ways of spending their money (conversations with industry participants: 2011, 2012). Jockeys and trainers have an unspoken code for dealing with owners, in that communication needs to be restricted to a level that won't hinder the business relationship with the owner, yet retain their trust (conversations with jockeys and trainers: 2011, 2012). Kate Fox mentions the fact that the racehorse will regularly be identified as though it is owned by the trainer, with the owner taking a very shadowed back-seat (2005: 79). This is partially reflected in the use of the trainer's silks (racing colours) by many owners, allowing the horse and jockey to be identified with that particular stable, rather than owner (personal observations at races: 2011, 2012). The subtlety underlying this aspect is that the trainer's 'ownership' of those specific jockey silks establishes financial status within the racing community; the symbolism of jockey silks depicts an ability to maintain the norms required for ownership. As Rebecca Cassidy notes, the definitive symbolism of the jockey silks underlies a traditional prestige in ownership, yet racing under the guise of the stable suggests that control over the horse and employment of the jockey has little to do with the owner (2002: 26). Similarly, the trainer's daily contact and understanding of the horse denotes a deeper connection with the animal than that attained by the owner. The introduction of syndicates has notably diminished the traditional socio-economic hierarchy associated with ownership in that both costs and prestige are radically decreased.

8.4.4.1 Referred status: the 'halo' effect

In her research into human benefits in animal ownership, Bonnie Berry (2008:77, 80) identifies the concept of a 'halo effect' whereby the symbolism of an animal is reflected upon its owner. She draws specifically on the imagery of the winning racehorse and its owner, preserved for posterity through the official photograph. Murray claims that ownership of a horse that becomes a champion can mean instant celebrity status; the horse cannot speak of its achievements, complain through a trade union or agent, so the owner is free to talk on its behalf with the media on such occasions (1992: 160). Goffman explains the social and financial aspirations evident in ownership with the notion that the extent to which a person is capable of maintaining an acceptable self-image through the perception of others, relates to their control of resources and their possession of qualities desired by society at large (1997: xvi). Social aspirations aside, the cost of racehorse ownership alone reflects financial standing within the greater society in that it averages at around \$2000 a month to keep a horse in training (conversation with owner: 2012). It is perhaps this

factor though, that lends to the owners a certain amount of disassociation within the racing community. They are generally regarded by the rest of the racing community as lacking in knowledge and unwise for sinking their money into the 'game' (Case 1991:31).

8.5 Additional participants

The general public or spectators and punters are a common feature of the race day and although their presence is accepted as necessary in part, the internationalisation of race gambling has deemed these participants at general meetings to be merely supplementary (communication with racing official: 2011). Kuiper tells of an inherent appeal in the cyclic nature of the race-day; there is always hope of success at the races and if one fails, the cycle will return to repeat itself (again with risks) (2009:38). The races come to symbolise hope (Ibid). Through participant observation, it was established that those spectators who attended with children generally wanted to encourage in their children a cultural practice that they themselves had grown up with, and usually claimed a strong affection for the horse as a drawing factor. Individual racing clubs may have different perspectives, with attempts made to encourage families with children in particular to engender a culture of race-going. However, many of these attempts often have little or no connection with the leading participant at the races; the horse. The spectators are also the only participants at the racecourse who are not allowed any physical contact with the horse. They are the participants with the least knowledge about the horses; spectators will rarely be privy to insider knowledge such as knowing the horse's paddock name. The 'us' and 'them' dichotomy within the racing community is demonstrated in the example of an incident at Riccarton Park, observed on Trackside television:

As the stable hand was leading the horse and jockey to the birdcage, the horse lashed out behind and hit the barrier fencing with its legs, startling the general public standing behind. This surprise of the public was noted in direct contrast to the amusement of the groom and jockey, who conferred with each other about the horse's seemingly predictable behaviour.

Spectators interviewed at different race meetings often stated that they did not regularly attend the gallops, but preferred harness racing. These spectators can be classified according to Kate Fox's analogy as 'socials', whose main reason for attendance is not specifically for the betting or appreciating the skill of jockeys and horses, but largely for social reasons (2005:13). Fox continues to identify this group largely with women, although she further categorises them into those attending due to corporate functions, couples, families and male or female groups of friends (Ibid:14). Their reasons for attending the races might include social-networking, business liaising and even searching for a potential partner. Kuiper also identifies the

important symbolism of the fashion contests often associated with major race meetings (2009:31). He associates the parading of thoroughbreds with their immaculate presentation, with the spectacle of women in all their finery on the cat-walk. Hidden beneath this demonstration, are important social and financial connotations of wealth, beauty and acceptance. Two of the significant elements identified at race meetings are those of competition and pageantry; this includes not only that of horses, but also their associates (Kuiper 2009: 31). In terms of the symbolism of the fashion contest, women continue this element of competition as well as pageantry in a context that has little visible association with the horses. This pageantry is also transferred through enculturation of race-going children, in that fashion-contests for children are now included at specific family-focussed race-meetings (personal observation at Riccarton Park: 2012).

8.5.1 Attempts at inclusion

Goffman (1997:38) defines 'role distance' in terms of participants who by their age or demeanour portray certain behavioural tendencies or body language to demonstrate that they are above a certain role. He gives the example of adults who ride on a merry-go-round and would demonstrate their disassociation with childhood while partaking of a childish activity. On a similar note, the opposite of this concept is demonstrated by many spectators at the races, in a form of 'role-adoption'. Attempts are made to appear knowledgeable in an area where their role would seem uncertain or lacking in knowledge. The desire to reflect a sense of belonging within the community or connection with a particular horse is often demonstrated through seemingly knowledgeable ramblings at the parade ring or barriers, such as:

"Mine is the dark brown one," "That horse looks like it has an advantage" or, "Number six is on form today."

Spectators generally also identify with the horses, rather than the human participants. Occasionally they will call out encouragement for a particular jockey, but largely shout support, calling their favourite horse's number. In contrast verbal abuse of jockeys is more commonplace, especially from disgruntled punters; verbal abuse of the horse is taboo.

8.6 Theory of race-day ritual

Social scientists have identified the ritual nature of behaviour at the races, suggesting that these particular behaviour patterns function to identity and safeguard the existing social order (Case 1991, Cassidy 2002, Fox 2005, Kuiper 2009). The formal properties of secular ritual identified by Moore and Myerhoff and noted in the auction, are relevant in the rituals practiced on the race-day (1977:7). The repetitive nature of a race-day is highly structured according to the time allocated for each

'ritual'. Participants 'act' according to the norms demanded of them by the industry (Ibid). During the course of this research, the conclusion was made that stable-hands always walk the horse in a clockwise direction and concentrate on the task at hand, avoiding eye-contact with the public. The stylization or symbols noticeable during the ritual, draw attention to the participants (Moore & Myerhoff 1977: 7). In this respect, the dress of participants, specifically the bright coloured jockey silks with their conspicuous patterns are only worn in association with the race. The sense of order is established by the stipendiary stewards, setting the race ritual apart from other routines of the race day (Ibid). Kuiper's study of Canterbury race-callers draws on the strong tradition of race-calling in the region (1991: 20). Racing commentary consists of a running call of the horses in their positions, continuously until the conclusion of the race (Ibid: 21). Race-calling is a highly skilled occupation; the race-caller is responsible for describing the positions of the horses during the race in a manner that lends itself to the pageantry of the race-day. Before this feature was added to the race, it was up to the individual race-goer to check how the horses were faring (Ibid). In this respect, those who were more familiar with the racing colours of the participants had a distinct advantage in remaining 'knowledgeable' as to the progress of the race, establishing a history of participants privy to insider knowledge of the racing community. The moments of chaos or undirected movement during the race, are broken by the voice of the race-caller who draws in the attention of the spectators, while the primary participants take the cue for their own prescribed actions. According to Kuiper, the race-caller's commentary is a 'dictionary of formulae' (1991:22, 23). This element points to the essential presence of this participant in leading the ritual and the clarity of direction given amongst the seeming chaos. On the race-day, two participant sectors have the most notable ritualised behaviour. These include the primary participants (namely jockeys and stable-hands and to a lesser extent, trainers) and additional participants in the form of punters and the general public.

8.6.1 Primary participants

Kate Fox identifies that each primary participant group has their own particular ritual on race-day (2005: 107). Some activities are more routine than ritual, evident in the fact that jockeys (dressed in the specific silks for that owner/trainer), will routinely spend a certain amount of time in their rooms before preparing for the race, walk upstairs to the scales and out to meet the horse in the birdcage before mounting and riding the race. Trainers might spend part of their time routinely talking to owners and make their way down to the birdcage (the ritual arena) where they play their role in giving final instructions to the jockey before the race. They then leave for a routine place in the facilities to watch the race, returning afterwards to the birdcage for a ritualised post-race explanation from the jockey. Stable-hands routinely spend much of their time preparing horses for their races in the stables behind the scenes. They will lead the horse through the check-points of stipendiary stewards to begin the pre-

race ritual, walking in a strictly anti-clockwise direction around the parade ring until the steward makes the call for them to walk through to the birdcage. Their rotations around this second arena are also made strictly in an anti-clockwise direction⁴⁸, and they are met by the jockey (and sometimes the trainer). Once again, a signal from the stipendiary steward (as ritual regulator) is anticipated before the jockey is aided with a leg-up into the saddle. The stable-hand continues leading the horse until they reach the entry to the race-track, in a manner that suggests showmanship since the jockey is quite capable of riding the horse unaided from the birdcage. The horse and jockey are then released onto the track, symbolising a distinct start to a new phase in the ritual and giving the jockey full control of their horse. Stable-hands will then routinely walk back to the main building together to watch the race and await the return of the horse. They then re-enter the ritual arena, taking responsibility to lead the unsaddled horse back to the stables, or in the case of the winner, to the swabbing stables under the watchful eye of the swabbing steward. These routines and rituals are somewhat prescribed by the specific roles of the participants in the industry. In their analysis of secular ritual, Moore and Myerhoff draw on the orderly nature of ritual in demarcating order from chaos (1977:17). The noticeable disorder between races, after horses have left the birdcage after the race and primary and secondary participants leave the view of the general public, gives around twenty minutes of 'down-time' before the next ritual begins with the parade of horses for the following race. While jockeys will use this time to change into clean silks for the next race, stewards, trainers and owners have no particular routine that they follow, but their role is noticeably less formal during this time.

8.6.2 Additional participants

It is the 'circuit ritual' of the general public that demonstrates a ritualised pursuit of the horse by the spectators (Fox 2005:105). The general public will await the arrival of the horses in the parade ring, observing them and deciding which ones they want to bet on, then follow them to the birdcage, observing the mounting of the jockey before heading off to the T.A.B. windows to bet and then down to a specific spot on the outside running rail to watch and cheer, while clutching their betting slips. Disappointment or euphoria follows the finish of the race and they might walk back to the birdcage to watch the unsaddling of the horses. Occasionally the disgruntled public berate the jockey for poor performance, an act which demonstrates another facet to the unbalanced relationship. The jockey, as a member of the racing community, is privy to insider information generally unknown to the public, yet the spectators have access to the identity of the jockey and can insult him/her by name; the jockey will usually have no access to the identity of the person insulting him/her.

⁴⁸ Rebecca Cassidy (2002: 56) states that horses are always led around in a clockwise direction, however at both Riccarton Park and Motukarara race courses, it is noted that horses are always led in an anti-clockwise direction.

8.7 Analysis of the race

Goffman identifies rituals as a necessary conventional act which allows individuals to pay respect to objects of value (1971:62). The ritual of the horse-race pays homage to its three major primary participants, namely the athletic skill of the jockey, the training abilities of the trainer and the beauty and athleticism of the horse. The race itself demonstrates ritualised behaviour on the part of these three participants; the human actors know well their roles which are defined by cultural norms and values. It is the equine participant whose role is potentially undecided; the horse too knows what is expected of him through training in that particular role, yet the blend of instinct and training is highlighted.

Observations made of members of the racing community outside of the race-day depicts participants who overwhelmingly concentrate on the actual race, either by watching the day's racing on television or watching re-runs of races and analysing behaviour during the race. Analyses of racing re-runs at the apprentice jockey school highlight the fact that during the race, general mention is not made of who owns or bred the horse; it is not about the past or future, but the present and the immediate. In addition, each race is a repetition of the previous in terms of order and direction of events followed (Kuiper 2009:29). For the purposes of analysis, the race has been divided into three constituent parts, namely from the bird-cage to the start, the actual race and from the finish back to the bird-cage.

8.7.1 Part one: From the bird-cage to the start

The technical aspects to race-riding are depicted in the fact that jockeys prepare a general race-strategy prior to the start. The competitive element emerges at the starting gates, as some jockeys describe familiarising themselves with equine competitors that might be hard to beat. Jockey informant Sam notes:

“So before I go in, I might be walking around looking who’s on that one, who’s on that, and familiarise with them because ideally you want to be following them, sort of work out your own race. If you pick out one to follow and know that’s the one to beat, more often than not, it should give you a nice drag or cover into the race. I would look at the form a bit to see beforehand. You might disregard some; you might have your own thoughts on other horses too.”

Interviews with jockeys and apprentices reflect the necessity for the jockey to relate to the horse from the moment s/he mounts in the birdcage, giving it a pat on the neck and talking to it in an attempt to keep it as relaxed as possible, otherwise the horse expends a large amount of energy before the race. Some informants described the process of channelling positive energy through their own bodies to the horse, as well as practical thoughts as to the condition of their horse and ensuring that their gear is functioning safely. Observations at the starting gates demonstrated these aspects

with staff assisting in tightening girths, as well as consultation with the official vet if they are concerned about the horse. Jockey informant Jessica describes her thoughts before a race:

“I have even called horses names that I don’t think belonged to them. You don’t have much time from the moment you get on the horse in the birdcage, you pretty much say: ‘Hi mate, how are you?’ And you’ve galloped down to the start by then. Sometimes they actually listen better when you call them by their name.”

8.7.2 Part two: The actual race

Once in the starting gates, the jockeys deploy their skills in the charged moment and describe the compulsion in which active thought is considered an unwanted distraction. This reinforces the embodied aspect of racing in which human-horse attunement (or achieving the Centaur ideal) is paramount. Complete concentration can be hard to accomplish, as jockey informant Jessica describes:

“You also have to remember to breathe – the first time I forgot to breathe normally. Then it’s always so hot or someone else’s horse is going off and that’s annoying.”

Once the race starts, the challenge is made to other horses. All jockeys interviewed noted that there can be a lot of cursing at the start of the race, especially as jockeys shuffle for prime position, the pace is changing and they are moving in on each other. This is noted as part of the game, with jockeys stating that quite often they are just bluffing the other jockeys; normally they don’t call out for any reason, but one has to be aware that it might be a bluff. Apprentices are taught to call out to other jockeys during the race in order to make them aware of their presence, suggesting that perhaps this element functions in a safety role. The focus for the jockey during the race remains an attempt at making conditions to keep the horse happy, or to suit his needs. It is not necessarily the horse who has clocked the fastest time in training who will win the race, but the one that remains relaxed and in control of the situation. Jockey informant Andy notes that the ability to keep the horse as relaxed as possible comes down to the training as well as the race riding, joining the ability of the trainer, jockey and horse in the race.

All jockeys pointed to the boundaries of control in the race; like the horse who is always reliable out of the gates, for some reason lands ‘on his nose’. Jockey informant Andy reiterates the instinctive nature of the jockey’s relationship with the horse during the race:

“Things happen out of anyone’s control, and you’ve got to expect that it can happen. You can have all the planning in the world and it can just go out the window. I think that’s why the better riders (they) follow their instincts because that’s what makes

them better than the other rider. Your first thought is your best one. If something happens and you don't take advantage of a situation when it happens, if you thought about it, then it's actually too late."

8.7.3 Part three: Warm-down and the bird-cage

Straight after crossing the finish, jockeys start to slow their horses, allowing a gentler gallop around the track until they are able to turn their horse around. Tradition has the horses return back to the bird-cage, with a strict adherence to placing so that the winner of the race will re-enter the bird-cage first.

Morris identifies the 'why we were beaten ceremony', as the ritualised post-race meeting between jockey and trainer (and occasionally owner) (1988: 106). This particular practice exemplifies the hierarchy of status roles, through the way in which the jockeys justify their performance, thereby negotiating continued relations with trainers and sometimes also owners. This ceremony entails the jockey's explanation for not winning, reasons for not following instructions and occasional berating by the trainer. If the owner is present, it might entail a discreet excuse by both jockey and trainer that appeases the owner, while 'massaging' his/her ego in order to retain their patronage (Ibid). While the jockey might blame the horse privately to the trainer, it is not in their best interests to belittle the owner's investment. However, successful trainers will not tolerate second-grade horses as this reflects negatively on their own abilities and will inform the owners that their horse is not good enough (personal communication with trainers: 2011). Similarly, the jockey needs to maintain a certain amount of respect from the trainer through their analysis of the race; apprentice jockey Jessica described a few different explanations that she used, including her loss for words after a bad race, by claiming to her patron trainer that she just didn't have any explanation to give him.

8.8 Summary

An analysis of the racecourse identifies this area as a discrete social space, with its own social codes and ritualized behaviours. This is noted as an apt setting for the distinct interaction of its participants in a scenario that might be quite removed from normal daily life. The naturalcultural order between human and horse is demonstrated both through the nature of ritualised behaviour of the human participants and the behaviour of the racehorse. A focus on the jockey and apprentice participant group highlights the strong social and financial dependence on the horse as well as the element of emotional attachment that comes into play. Using Kirrilly Thompson's concept of the 'centaur' in analysing the ideal jockey-horse relationship, a blending of natureculture is repeated from previous discussions on

domestication of the thoroughbred, as well as what has come to be culturally accepted or expected in this rider-horse relationship. Using Carol Case's categorisation of supplementary actors, I have analysed the roles of veterinarians, farriers, racing officials and owners in terms of their interconnection with primary participants on the race day (1991). I have categorised the general public (both spectators and gamblers) as additional participants in light of industry comments on their minor role in current economic importance for general race meetings. Drawing on Kuiper's analysis of a race-meeting (2009) and including Fox's examination of the British racecourse (2005), I categorise the race ritual according to Moore and Myerhoff's formal properties of ritual (1977). This highlights the three central participants in the race: the jockey, horse and trainer (who is there by proxy). Following on Kuiper's call for an analysis of the actual race, I draw heavily on communication with jockeys and observation of races, identifying the distinct bond that is formed between horse and rider (2004). In the following chapter, I continue with Kuiper's analysis of the race-day (2009), drawing on his distinction between categories of risk evident at the racecourse, as well as drawing on the work of Mary Douglas in assessing risk within other sectors of the industry.

Chapter Nine: Risk within the thoroughbred racing industry

“I had bought a mare at the sales and the family won a Group One race, so I sent her to a top stallion. Then another mare kicked her in the head in the paddock and she died. Just like that, it was over.”

Conversation with owner-trainer Henry, 2011.

9.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I drew on Koenraad Kuiper's notion of the inherent risk within the race (danger for human and horse), that creates the excitement and draws participants to race-meetings (2009: 32). He also draws attention to the fact that racing holds both physical and financial risk for its participants (ibid: 31). In this chapter, I examine those risks more closely, identifying various levels of risk-taking within the industry. In her esteemed contribution to anthropological studies of risk, Mary Douglas draws attention to the important role of the community in establishing norms for acceptable behaviour (1986: 69). It is through this community that risks are established and acknowledged (ibid). In chapter 5, I recognised the sense of community amongst breeders as well as the general racing community that includes trainers and other participants in the industry. In this chapter, I explore the risks to those participants and I examine more closely the extent of these foreseeable losses (financial and/or commodity losses through injuries and fatalities to horses as well as physical injury to primary participants) in terms of what they hold most valuable. I look at the nature of risk in the thoroughbred industry, drawing on the role of hierarchies and examining the nature of physical risk. Of particular interest, is the relevance of Douglas's theory of 'subjective immunity' (1986:30). I apply this theory to the racing industry, to explain the shared risk on various levels of participation. I continue with an assessment of the particular social and financial risks involved within the specific participant groups, including that of the horse and the general public (punters). Using Douglas and Wildavsky's theory of 'cost effectiveness', I examine what motivates participants in terms of a scale of benefits as opposed to the perceived risk (1982: 69). This also allows for a long-term estimation of risk, which is essential to understanding the social and financial aspects of racehorse ownership (ibid). In terms of an investment in an intimate human-animal relationship made by the participants, I examine the emotional risk that is created through the nature of racing.

9.2 Theory of risk

A study of risk and how it is handled within a specific society, highlights the base morals and values of that particular group (Caplan 2000:24). While there is risk evident within all social settings, perception of that risk is an individual attribute relating to socio-cultural norms and values (Frey 1991: 137). Anthropologist Mary Douglas in her analysis of risk reiterates the fact that risk perception is not a shared predisposition (1992: 11). Douglas also notes that risk refers not only to a likelihood of an event, but also to the consequences surrounding it, whether these are negative and/or positive (Ibid: 31, 40). In terms of the assemblage perspective animating this thesis, the context of these webs of relationships between various actors is crucial for structuring the way risk is viewed (Caplan 2000: 25, 26).

9.3 The nature of risk in thoroughbred racing

Numerous levels of risk-taking have been identified within the thoroughbred racing industry, specific to the various roles of participants and their level of interaction with the horse. Jane Smiley draws largely on the nature of physical risk inherent in the racing industry, in that attempts to reduce risk, such as padding (specifically in the starting boxes) and 'forgiving' (yielding) running rails cannot completely eliminate the chance of misfortune (2005:221).⁴⁹

9.3.1 Role of hierarchies

An analysis of risk reveals the connections between materialities (horses' bodies) and economic values (exchange values and profit potentials of horses), mediated by the representatives of regulative practices (vets and stipendiary stewards), who are accredited by authorizing agencies within the industry. Mary Douglas also identifies the importance of hierarchical structures within risk assessment in that hierarchy functions to maintain the interests of the structure (1992: 226). She distinguishes between two poles of behaviour; deceit and insubordination are condemned while incompetence is corrected. This can be related to the roles of stipendiary stewards and racecourse veterinarians, who function as risk assessors within the racing industry, balancing physical risk to the jockeys and horses with social and financial risk to the trainers and owners. The stewards decide on appropriate punishments for inappropriate conduct that places other jockeys or horses at risk. These actions safeguard the community as a whole, as well as protecting the individual's wellbeing. Periods of exclusion are generally short in order to emphasise a warning that severe transgression will result in permanent exclusion from the community. Similarly, the veterinarian might scratch a horse from the race if they suspect injury, which

⁴⁹ Injuries are most commonly sustained in the starting boxes, where a jockey can be crushed by a nervous horse or when the horse hits the running rail during the race. These are significant aspects (or things in the assemblage), that can be adapted to reduce risk. Of note however, is the fact that many injuries to both human and horse occur through heel-clipping; an element which cannot be controlled by racing risk assessors.

safeguards the jockey from a potentially dangerous situation during the race and protects the owner's investment.

This interrelatedness is also highlighted in Frey's notion that the value of risk-analysis in sport is a means to measure meaning to its participants (1991:144). The stipendiary stewards may choose to 'remove' an offending jockey (or trainer) from racing for a select number of days appropriate to the level of transgression. Some of these transgressions might include cutting off another rider (causing the jockey to have to slow their own horse to avoid a collision), or not riding a horse to its full potential and deliberately slowing the horse to allow another to get placed. This ultimately has a social and financial effect on their career at that time. In assessing whether the transgressor is a risk to other participants, this has a subsequent effect on other participants who might have been depending on that particular jockey to ride for them in a forthcoming race. A jockey that is constantly called before the 'stipes' (stipendiary stewards) may be branded as a high risk to trainers.

9.4 Physical risk

The physical risk of injury is largely associated with those participants who have the closest relationship with the horse, namely the stable-hands (who risk getting kicked, bitten or trampled), jockeys and exercise riders (who risk this in addition to falls) and the trainers who are 'hands-on' with the horses. The average horse weighs around a half tonne and runs up to 60 km. per hour (Cowley et al. 2007:639). This weight and speed can lead to various types of injuries including crushing, fractures and death. In the breeding sector, human horse owners cooperate for the purpose of the procreative coupling of their horses in a paid service by the owner of the mare. Handling of stallions is considered especially high-risk, due to their strength and volatility; the risk of physical (and related financial) damage is also posed to the mares and stallions themselves, as reflected in the protective gear used (see illustration 28). These bodily technologies involved in reducing risk include padded boots worn by mares on their hind hooves to restrict damage to the stallion from kicking and a twitch (restraint around the top lip), to restrict biting. The emphasis on risk to the stallion (and his associated value) is noted in that the mare is restricted in this manner but he is free to bite her during the act of service. It is at the auction where the focus on physical risk is least evident; perhaps the primary concern is with price and profit, leaving the physical risks as secondary. The high potential for handlers to be kicked, bitten or trampled by a fearful or excited young horse is noted with the presence of the ambulance at the auction, but this is usually less noticeable than the paramedic presence at the races. The ambulance and veterinarian clearly follow the progress of the race, demonstrating a sense of urgency that provides context for the risks being taken by jockeys and horses. In this situation, risk is

directly appealed to as a drawing factor for the general public (who ‘ride by proxy’, as will be discussed further in section 9.4.4).



Illustration 28: The padded enclosure at Cambridge Stud used for stallion service, including protective gear for both human handlers and the horses.

9.4.1 Riding as risk

Mary Douglas claims that familiarity of actions leads to a tendency for risk-takers to underestimate potentially tragic outcomes (1986: 29). Riding is a daily occupation for jockeys and track-riders, not only due to financial necessity but also the physical necessity of maintaining a high fitness level. In this respect it is a familiar action, as for stable-hands and trainers in their daily handling of the horses. Cross-species bodily interaction therefore plays an important role for enskillment as well as familiarity, and has a bearing on risk- for a comparative case of apprenticeship in human-animal relations see Locke’s study of apprenticeship learning in Nepali elephant handlers (2002, 2007:207-234). Horse-people however are highly aware of the fact that even the calmest horse has the potential to inflict severe harm on its handler, represented in the notion of no horse ever being ‘bomb-proof’ (refer to Chapter 4, on domestication of thoroughbreds). Knowledge of the dangers involved are not ignored by jockeys and track-riders, in that they wear the regulated safety gear and have all had plenty of experience with horse-related accidents, as jockey informants noted:

“... Been pretty lucky; fractured a knee joint, been knocked out, fractured and dislocated part of my hand, had other injuries to my hands. One day I fell off and landed on my feet and within an hour my ankles had blown up; got a haematoma. Jockeys tend to recover very quickly from injury because they are super fit; you’re fitter than you realise. It’s part of the job. I’ve also been kicked; a horse fell over and kicked me in the eyebrow, I’ve had a shoe come off and hit me in the jaw. These are not all race day injuries, some can be track work, some can be trials. Things happen.”

“...you would be rather naive to think that you’re not going to get any injuries. I’ve had broken legs, wrist, um...kidneys, torn kidneys and things like that. But I think one of the worst falls I think I never actually broke anything; one went down in front of me and my horse went over the top of it, and it wrapped me around the running post. I felt this for about 6 months after, I wasn’t scared but I think for about six months I didn’t ride very good. (It’s) just a confidence thing. I think like you drive a car defensively, I think you sort of go into that mode a little bit more. Like I said, I wasn’t scared, but I think it affected my riding for a little while.”

The high physical risk accorded to racing stables is noted in the A.C.C. levies expected of trainers (McCarty 2012:18). However Johns et al. in their research into horse-related injury in urban New Zealand found that falls and head injuries amongst racing professionals were far lower than that of the amateur equestrian sector, including casual riders from the tourist sector (2004:1237). This suggests that outsiders have a perception of greater risk than insiders do. It is also essential to consider the fact that industry training of apprentice jockeys does not identify the actual horse as a risk, rather noting that falling off the horse is the risk, and injury depends on how the rider falls off. Hazard elimination forms an important part of training, whereby trainees are taught how to fall/land.

The characteristics selected through domestication, results in a breed with congenital infirmities (discussed previously in this thesis in the chapter on domestication) and highlight the potential for physical risk to this particular breed of horse. Thoroughbreds are notorious for breaking bones in their legs due to the in-bred characteristic of long, thin bones suited to running fast over long distances. They are also noted with having the desire to run, even through the pain of injuries that might increase in severity with physical effort. Interviews suggest that it is human actions which are the cause of most accidents; when questioned as to the nature of falls, most jockeys attributed this to clipping the heels of the horse in front of them during the race (personal communication with jockeys: 2011, 2012).⁵⁰ However, the potential risk of elements seemingly beyond human control (infirmities

⁵⁰ Sadly, during the final drafting of this thesis, a Canterbury jockey lost her life through a fall caused by this very factor.

of the breed) is noted by the participants themselves, as jockey informant Andy states:

“I had an incident here about 3 years ago at Riccarton where I was riding a horse that broke both its legs, went straight down on its head and I went down and bang, was knocked out. I didn’t know anything for several minutes. Obviously falls are unexpected things.”

9.4.2 Risk and trust

In her study of risk as a consequence of actions taken, Janet Bujra draws on Beck and Giddens’ crucially linked concepts of risk and trust (in Caplan 2000:59). Trust itself is created through the social system specific to a particular group (Ibid: 60). Paul Killworth draws on the responsibilities of each individual to protect the whole (in Caplan 2000: 145). At the racetrack, this is evident in the fact that trust in the abilities of other professionals is a prominent feature, specifically in the race. Mary Douglas draws on Charles Fried’s ‘risk pool’ in order to demonstrate that the actions of one subject the risks taken to others that s/he comes into contact with (1986:14). This is relevant to a focus on risk in the racing industry, since a jockey who acts recklessly can cause a multi-horse and jockey accident. The shared risks and the obligations to mitigate them for the sake of colleagues and horses other than oneself builds trust within a community of practice, which in turn is crucial for identification with a jockey sub-culture (identified in the works of Fox 2005 and Case 1986). For a comparative case study of the role of communities of practice for the development of occupational subcultures amongst animal workers, see Locke’s study of Nepali elephant handlers (2007). This study does not explicitly consider the formative role of risk in its analysis.

A focus on physical risk further highlights the shared role of human participants in their relationships with the horse, preparing it for the race. The jockey is a proxy for the other participants in riding the horse during the race, yet other participants (trainer, stable-hand and breeder) have spent many hours with the horse and their efforts contribute to some extent towards the level of risk in the race. This emphasises the importance of each individual in their responsibility to the whole, highlighting the interconnectedness of each racehorse and human participant with the other, through shared safety in the race.

9.4.3 ‘Subjective immunity’

Mary Douglas notes that discussions of certain specific matters of risk within a particular culture are avoided as taboo (1992:212). Although jockey participants were

willing to name all the injuries they had sustained over the years, they avoided a deeper discussion on the actual risk, in terms of what Douglas coins 'subjective immunity' (1986: 30). It is essential for jockeys to focus on success rather than failure (actuality of risk) and as a result, discussions of risk are considered taboo. This is reflected in a statement made by apprentice jockey Ben, when it was revealed that he had fallen off on the morning of an apprentice-school meeting:

"I'm not afraid of falling off and I'm not that worried about messing up. It's just talking about it..."

This practice of avoiding discussion of the physical risks involved in a career with racehorses and dealing with that risk, suggests a process of enculturation that is largely learnt by a lifetime of exposure to the potential risks of being around horses. Young women who come from a Pony Club-type background, would have witnessed many accidents as well as experienced many themselves, with the typical mantra followed of 'Get right back on after a fall'. Daily exposure to potential risk in the stable-yards does not necessarily lend itself to complacency over discussing risk, but rather the need to avoid discussing what might *not* happen, in order that both horse and handler/rider remain calm and effective in their roles. This psychological aspect to risk can effectively make or break the jockey/track-rider's career; an element that some riders struggle with, especially after a fall, as reflected by jockey informant Jessica:

"At the moment, I'm sort of struggling. I'm fine once I go out of the gates, but I'm always constantly thinking that I don't want to get hurt... I was getting to the next step, so now I don't want to get hurt because I will lose that step that I'm getting to. But then at the end of the day I guess if it doesn't kill you, it's going to hurt."

9.4.4 Risk by proxy

In his analysis of the Canterbury race day, Koenraad Kuiper continues the idea of 'controlled risk' with his focus on the specific nature of risk-appeal for the New Zealand general public (2009:38). He claims that the excessive control of legislative bodies on regulating risk for its residents, leave few outlets for the risk-taking inherent in human nature; the ritualised risk-taking in the horse-race allows an attractive outlet for this need (Ibid). Walker also notes risk appeal in the attraction of spectators to equestrian sports such as the rodeo and horse racing (2008:164). Theirs is a 'controlled risk' whereby satisfaction can be derived through riding by proxy (Ibid). This however, does not explain why so many spectators who are horse-riders themselves and might take that risk daily, are drawn to the races. Horse ownership and associated thrill of winning by proxy, is another aspect of the appeal of racing for the general public (a concept which will be investigated further in the following section on social and financial risk).



Illustration 29: The steeplechase diminishes in popularity with the risks involved.

9.5 Social and financial risk

9.5.1 Link with physical risk

From the assemblage perspective, social relations, economic factors, and the performance of the human-horse coupling, are mutually implicated. As discussed in the previous chapter of the racecourse, the jockey's future career depends largely on his/her success in race riding, but also includes social networking as a key to getting rides. In their analysis of the selection of dangers, Douglas and Wildavsky identify the close connection between taking physical risks and social benefit, noting that such risks are allowed only of a specific sector of society and then precisely which risks can be taken (1982:6). This is demonstrated in the racing sector, where the jockey might risk his/her social connection with the trainer if s/he consistently rides the horse in a manner contrary to that which the trainer requests (demonstrating a potential for conflict of opinion between the way different humans relate to horses and the way in which they perceive race strategy). The trainer might think that the horse should be started towards the middle of the pack and held back until the final straight, whereas the jockey might feel that the horse is running so well that s/he allows it to go to the front earlier. The social connection is also strongly linked to economic issues, in that there is a certain amount of loyalty between the trainer who has a specific jockey ride track work for him/her, and the resultant expectation that it will secure a certain number of race-rides in the near future. The social and financial survival of the jockey is also strongly linked to the physical risk of race riding, in that

a serious fall and resultant injury can result in a 'laying off' period, meaning no income for that time. Serious injury which could result in an end to a racing career might also mean obstacles to alternative employment through a physical condition, such as paralysis.

9.5.2 Specific risk for the trainer

The trainer has a heavy financial risk in that for most, this is their own business and carries all the risks of self-employment. S/he must carry the financial burden of non-paying owners, the risk of injury to his/her employees, as well as the social risk of attracting clients and good jockeys. For those trainers who take on an apprentice, social and financial risk is increased, in that the apprentice is still learning and might not perform to a standard that the owner wants. Every race is a risk for the trainer in that non-performance must be adequately explained to the owner in order to retain their patronage. Mary Douglas draws importance to the concept of blame in risk studies, stating that explanations for failure increase with subsequent increase in competitiveness and luck remains an explanatory tool (1986:62). In this respect, both the jockey and trainer are expected to give explanations for the failure of the horse to win a race; jockeys must blame anything credible in order to retain socio-economic ties with the trainer, as must the trainer in order to retain the owner's patronage. The terminology of racing as a 'game' (refer to Chapter 7: Training stables), allows for the credibility of 'luck' as an explanation. 'Luck' is a salient term in the life-world of horse racing practitioners, one that in this circumscribed context carries particular culturally-constructed significance. As part of the explanatory and justificatory vocabulary of racing discourse, it serves an important function for safeguarding professionals from failure. The concept of 'luck' rests on understandings expressed in chapter 8: The Racecourse. The chaos, contingency, and unpredictability that is intrinsic to the appeal of racing, represents an on-going livelihood challenge for actors who are professionally invested in these competitive uncertainties.

9.5.3 Specific risks of ownership

Financial risk is worked into the appeal of ownership to such an extent, that it is camouflaged by social aspects including status associated with racehorse ownership. It is widely understood that most owners will never make a profit from their investment, yet the appeal of ownership seemingly blinds participants to that risk. Mary Douglas identifies the problem of persuading the risk-averse to take the required risks, suggesting that it is the rewards offered for that behaviour which help justify their participation (1986:43). The average race size at Riccarton Park is ten entries, which means that only one out of ten horses will win; the owner risks a ninety percent chance of losing, yet this is not a sufficient deterrent. Furthermore, ownership of steeplechasers is understood to carry increased risk since one must

invest two years training horses for this purpose, and there is a higher physical risk of injury (personal communication with trainers:2011).

Although most owners who do not run a home-based breeding or training operation do not subject themselves to physical risk, they are seen to be risking themselves vicariously through their association with the trio of trainer, jockey, and horse (Frey 1991:137). Their risk starts with the auction, where they must choose an unproven horse in which to invest a large amount of money over an extended period of time, placing their trust in particular trainers and jockeys to make a profit for them. As bloodstock agent Stuart Hale advises:

“While there are no sure things in racing, it’s all about reducing your risk and one good way is to find a formula that already works and find out why.” (Rodley 2012:12).

Once they own the horse, the financial risk is maintained during training in that any injury or related misfortune must be financed by the owner. The owner retains the right to switch allegiance to a different trainer in the advent that his/her expectations for their investment are not being met.⁵¹ Douglas and Wildavsky use the term ‘cost effectiveness’ to describe the choices people make when weighing risk with benefit and deciding that the benefit outweighs the risk (or cost), which perhaps reflects enculturation within a social world shaped by a capitalist economy (1982:69,70). This includes the element of time, allowing for immediate risk that might produce long-term benefits (Ibid: 70). This has implications for social and financial choices made in ownership. The risks might seem too high for some while for others independent variables (such as emotional attachment) might translate into stronger benefits. This also relates to the perception of some owners that there are benefits to be made in retaining a young horse that does not win immediately. The draw of ownership is based on the dream of having a winner, with the strong inclination to shrug off losses immediately and begin focussing on the next race (Personal communication with owner: 2012).

Syndicates and partnerships offset financial risk by sharing responsibility with others, although the challenge of reaching decision-making consensus within a group adds another dimension. Whilst group ownership reduces financial risk for individuals, it can also reduce the social benefits of status and prestige that comes from owning winning and admired horses. For breeders too there are financial risks which extend over many years, since their stallions must wait until their progeny prove themselves on the track before they can attain financial success.

⁵¹ A trainer informant mentioned that they have had the odd conflict of interest with an owner over the welfare of a horse; in one such instance, suggestions that a horse be retired due to persistent injury were ignored and the owner switched their allegiance to another trainer, resulting in the break-down and subsequent euthanasia of the horse.

9.6 Risk and implications for the horse

The risk for the horse is largely unconsidered by some of the human actors – those in roles that relate to the horse on a daily basis and especially over a long period of time are more aware of this issue. Risk for the horse plays an important role in deciding its future. A horse that is successful and exceeds the owner's expectations might either be retained by its owner or risks being sold on. A horse that has persistent injury might be deemed too much of a risk and be sold on either to an amateur owner (riding for leisure purposes), or to a pet meat butcher. Neither of these scenarios are favourable; while the general category of horse-crazy teenage girls may provide an initially loving home for the retired race-horse, lack of specialised knowledge on the care and requirements of these animals can lead to unintentional maltreatment and abuse. In this respect, selling to a pet-meat butcher might be a more favourable form of euthanasia. This sees another component of the actor-network/assemblage emerging, whereby horse racing articulates with a connected industry in which unwanted bodies are transformed into food for actors entangled with different markets and practices, involving different kinds of interspecies relationships.

9.7 Risk for the general public

Kuiper's theory on the attraction of racing for the general public as a means of both riding or owning by proxy (see 9.4.4 Risk by proxy), fails to identify the financial risk posed to this participant group through gambling as a social problem, leading to debt, addiction and to dysfunctional relationships. In her study on risk acceptability, Mary Douglas states that gamblers downplay their risk-taking by emphasizing skill over luck (1986: 69). Punters might choose to back a specific horse, but run the risk of that horse being boxed in by other horses, being held back too late by the jockey or even falling in a hole and breaking its leg. These shared risks with the primary participants in the running of the race, have financial implications for the punter, who risks losing money and the prestige of being a winner. Similarly to the owner, the punter too is subject to Douglas and Wildavsky's notion of cost-effectiveness when weighing out the amounts of money that s/he chooses to wager on each horse or race (1982:70). When taken to extreme, addictive gambling has the risk of multiple repercussions for the gambler and their family. These might include loss of earnings and resultant loss of financial support for the family and addiction to a lifestyle of excessive spending and resultant debt.

9.8 Emotional risk

In an industry where various horses come and go at any given time, emotional attachment to the horse is perceived as a risk to many participants but nonetheless

not discouraged since intimacy and affinity with horses is crucial for sustained commitment. This is directly related to the physical, social and financial risks inherent in the industry, as the horse might be there today and gone tomorrow. Apprentice jockey informant Jessica highlights this aspect:

“My boss promised me one of my favourite little mares a few years ago, and one day I got up to work and she was gone and I was very upset and I almost quit. But she had gone off to stud. I often ask after her, but he is vague about where she is – I think he knows I’ll go off and get her.”

The stable hands risk emotional attachment to the horses as they must care day in and day out for them, bonding with certain horses that display attractive characteristics. Similarly, most trainers have been drawn to this occupation through a love of horses, but need to balance running a business with the risk of emotional attachment and the notion that s/he cannot ‘fall in love’ with all of them.

9.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have examined an important feature of the racing industry through risk analysis of the participants. In an industry inundated by risk, it is noted that risk-aversion does not necessarily increase with risk awareness. Jockeys are well aware of the physical dangers they face, yet are still drawn to this occupation. Similarly owners well know that they aren’t likely to make a profit yet still cling to the ideal of owning a potential winner. A form of risk-aversion is practiced in that speaking of dangers, aversion to dwelling upon the physical danger and possibilities is generally taboo amongst jockeys. Similarly, owners, breeders and trainers will not dwell on the negative aspects of their roles, such as losing thousands of dollars on a regular basis or having to let a non-performing horse go. This is due largely to what Douglas and Wildavsky have identified as a precarious balance of risk-worthiness versus risk actuality or negative effect (1982:69, 70). If too much emphasis is placed on the negative (risk), the possibilities of performing that role are rendered impossible. In the following chapter, I refer to the role of women in an industry that was once largely dominated by men and that deemed the very inclusion of women in specific roles (such as jockeys) as being too high-risk. I examine the nature of the relationship women have with horses, drawing on the work of Lynda Birke and Keri Brandt. Using Martin Tollich’s analysis of the increasing number of female participants in the South Island thoroughbred racing industry, I look at possible reasons for this distinct contrast with racing ethnographies from other regions (1996).

Chapter Ten: Women in thoroughbred racing

Colette: "How do you feel about the horses?"

Amy: "I love them."

Conversation with apprentice-jockey Amy, 2012.

10.1 Introduction

In her review of women in the New Zealand racing industry, Mary Mountier identifies the fact that at beginner level, equestrian sports start at Pony Club and are patronised largely by females (1993:3). In this chapter I examine the increasing number of female participants in the New Zealand racing industry at large, compared with the disproportionate number identified in other studies of the racing industry (Cassidy 2002, 2007, Fox 2005). Based on the work of sociologist Martin Tollich, I attempt to explain the socio-economic reasons behind this rapid increase in female participants in roles once traditionally reserved for males (1996). Drawing on the work of human-horse authorities Birke and Brandt, I propose the inclusion of an emotional connection that women have with horses as a strong contributing factor (2009). I examine the importance of male and female partnerships within the industry, based on concepts identified in the work of sociologist Janet Finch (1983). The importance of women in supportive roles of their partners is evident in the racing industry specifically in the breeding and training sectors, where the partner is a primary participant.

10.2 The draw of women to horses

Women have traditionally had a stronger association with the organic or natural elements while the male world has come to signify culture (Noske 1989:40) (See Ortner: 1974, 'Is Female to Male as Nature is To Culture'). In their study of women in the traditional male occupation of the Police, Berg and Budnick note that physically challenging occupations that demand aggressiveness are traditionally associated with men, while women's occupations tend to be categorized as more gentle and passive (In Britz 1997: 131). Similarly, James Frey notes that high risk sports are attributed a connection with masculinity (1991:140). Within equine sports, gender is traditionally associated with specific disciplines and sees the more 'passive' sector of dressage largely associated with women, while 'aggressive' and more dangerous activities like rodeo and racing are the male domain (Birke & Brandt 2009: 190). These perceptions have created a formidable barrier for women attempting to become jockeys. In her book on women in New Zealand racing, Mary Mountier

points to the egalitarian nature of equestrianism in that the 'playing field' is open to both sexes, reflected in equestrian sports at international level (1993:3). Mary Midkiff draws on the nature of the human-equine bond between horse and rider to point out that being mounted supersedes physical strength; a woman can be on equal terms with a man similarly mounted by drawing on the physical strength of the horse itself (2001:117,118). In Chapter 8, I drew on Kirilly Thompson's representation of Centaur imagery to describe the nature of the human-horse relationship in the embodied aspect of interspecies intimacy (2011). This imagery of 'rider-horse' epitomises the human-horse relationship; the theriomorphic form of the centaur (in terms of the fusion of bodies), symbolises this oneness. This symbolised ability of both human to ride well and horse to respond effectively to achieve racing success, is notably appropriate to both male and female in that images of the Centauress are evident in Greek mythology from the third century B.C.E.⁵² However, the centaur is one sentient being with the body parts of two different species, whereas the conjunction of rider with horse represents two sentient beings and bodies in a state of attunement in the context of shared activity. Thomson's use of centaur imagery therefore has analytic limitations by virtue of the way that it can obscure crucial aspects of the human-horse relationship (communication between sentient beings).

Natural horsemanship guru, Monty Roberts claims the draw of women to horses is an emotional attraction based on their shared vulnerability to stronger 'predators' (2000: 5). The relationship between women and horses has also been seen as spiritual; through their connection with these animals, women claim to grow stronger within themselves in a positive manner (Midkiff: 2001; Birke & Brandt: 2009). If this theory is drawing on the maternal instincts of women in a nurturing role, it does not take into account the ability of men to also attain a spiritual connection with horses; an aspect which was definitely evident in my fieldwork. It is a commonly held misperception that participants in the racing industry must be strong and aggressive in order to handle unruly thoroughbreds, when in effect as Roberts indicates one must rather empathise with what the horse is feeling (2000:5).

The notion that horses respond better to women overall is questionable (Velija 2010: 308). This questionability suggests a cultural conception circulates which advises an equine disposition toward greater empathic engagement with females. This may have arisen in English-speaking cultures due to current popularity of equine sports and activities with girls. Pony club draws mainly from young girls and commercial representation of ponies and horses in books, toys and movies draws on their association with girls. In contrast, in the horse cultures of Central Asia, very different ideas are held about horses and the human genders. From my own research, the idea of horses responding better to women is not universally held by my informants. They claim that the individual relationships between particular horses and particular

persons make generalizations based on gender redundant. This fact is depicted in a conversation with breeders Paul and Lisa:

Paul: "Let's just say I have ones that I have less time for than others."

Lisa: "There's ones that Paul bonds with well, and there's others, like this mare, she only has to see him and she goes running, but I can go out to her and she's fine. You have to know which day. Most days I can get up to her."

10.3 Women in New Zealand racing

Observations of various race-meetings during the process of fieldwork identified that the vast majority of women employed in the New Zealand racing industry are in the participant group of stable-hands. Cultural constructions of motherhood in this culture transpose easily to the care of horses. Rebecca Cassidy draws on the nature/nurture binary to explain why women proliferate in such 'entry-level' positions, citing the feminine attribute of mothering or nurturing (2002: 37), a view supported by Velija and Flynn in their research on female jockeys (2010:310). Trainer informant Bob supported this notion, recounting that he relies heavily on female stable-hands as he finds them more sympathetic to the horses (Personal communication: 2011). In the same way, jockey apprentice Jessica notes:

"Women work better with horses – yes, because men thought horses were work, women thought they were pets. Women pretty much still think they're pets."

She continues with this idea by describing an incident that depicts her relationship with the horses:

"I was looking after a horse that we took to Wellington and he was quite young and nervous. He belonged to a very big owner and as I was in the stable with him, I was talking non-stop to him as though he were a child, asking him how he was feeling etc. Then suddenly the owner pokes his head around the stable door and says, 'Who are you talking to?' So I said, 'The horse.' So he said, 'Why are you talking to the horse, does he listen to you?' So I said, 'I hope so'."

Animals for work and animals as pets are the culturally available categories in this cultural context, but neither perfectly fits the human-horse relationship, relying as it does on both intimacy and investment.



Illustration 30: The vast majority of stable-hands/handlers in Canterbury are female.

10.4 Participant groups

10.4.1 Stable hands

The role of the stable hand is not glamorous or 'easy', as Lynda Birke and Keri Brandt point out (2009:191); their tasks include heavy lifting, shovelling large amounts of manure daily and dealing with unruly horses. The nature of this work was highlighted during participant observation (excerpt from my fieldnotes):

While helping a female participant mix up food for the horses, I offered to help her move a recent delivery of feed sacks that had arrived the previous evening. She seemed to be moving each bag effortlessly; I attempted to lift one and was shocked at the weight. Working daily around my own horse, I expected to be able to handle the work, but after two bags I gave up.

10.4.2 Jockeys and apprentices

In his research into the feminisation of the New Zealand jockey profession, sociologist Martin Tollich notes that female jockeys were marketed to the betting public from the mid-1990s in terms of persuading gamblers that female jockeys

competing against men were worth betting on (1996:50, 51). David Grant claims that the increasing weight of male jockeys in addition to political pressure from New Zealand feminists led to the inclusion of females (2001: 84, 86). Female jockeys still needed to prove themselves in order to overcome the misconception that they lacked the strength and male aggression necessary to win (Tollich 1996:53).⁵³ In order to be fully accepted into the sporting sub-culture, women must embrace the norms and values of that group (Abrahamson & Modzelewski 2011: 131). Conversations held with jockeys and apprentices during my fieldwork suggested that female jockeys understand and accept the risks involved in racing and the necessity for consideration of other jockeys/horses while riding and that they feel accepted by their male counterparts.

The current ratio of male to female apprentices on the South Island is 1: 2,5 and the high proportion of females riding in races at Riccarton Park necessitates larger facilities for female jockeys (Personal communication with jockey apprentice Jessica: 2012). While I acknowledge the limitations of my research and consider that further research is needed into the motivations of males and females for entering the industry, my data suggests a distinct difference in motivation for males and females in the jockey profession. Many male apprentice jockeys have chosen this career due to their size and competitiveness, having had to learn how to ride once entering the industry. A few of the jockeys (both male and female) were born into the industry, having a parent or relatives already involved in primary roles and thereby enculturating them at an earlier age. Some male jockeys are able to establish themselves as apprentices as riding comes more naturally to them than others. None of the male jockeys/apprentices interviewed claimed to have been drawn to the industry mainly through a specific emotional attachment to horses. In comparison, most of the females interviewed have been drawn to the industry through a love of horses, having grown up with a strong horse tradition associated with pony club and showing (personal communication with informants 2011, 2012). This value demonstrated by females in their motivation for wanting to become jockeys could possibly have aided a faster assimilation into the racing community. This notion alone cannot fully explain such a drastic change in numbers between males and females. Martin Tollich highlights the economic decline of the industry with the exodus of the most successful riders to greener pastures overseas, and a gap remaining in the local industry that required rapid filling (1996: 56, 58).⁵⁴ From an

⁵³ Jockey informants stated that it is incredibly hard for a woman to establish herself as a jockey in the U.S.A. An anonymous article on 'The woman's touch' (1993) gives an example of how American jockey Julie Krone had to establish her equality with the male jockeys: an angry male jockey felt that she had boxed in his horse, so he snapped his whip on her. She in turn punched him afterwards in the weighing room and he retaliated by pushing her into a pool. She then smashed a chair on him before it was finished. Jockey informants stated that such outbursts are prevented by the judgement of the stipendiary stewards in this region.

⁵⁴ Tollich continues this thought in claiming that the proliferation of women in the industry is symbolic of the remnant of an industry, due to its economic decline.

assemblage perspective this demographic incentive to accept women jockeys reminds us of the connections between different racing scenes, involving the transfer of labour due to attractive opportunities. The hierarchical relationships between the South Island, North Island and Australian racing scenes are seen in terms of size, prestige, and capital (relevant to racing, breeding, exchange and employment). This opinion is supported in theory by jockey informant Sam, who identifies both a change from male chauvinist values and a change in relation to instrumental factors. He states:

“The girls are certainly well accepted in racing now. In Australia, it was very hard for the girls to get a go. Even in the big towns, it’s a bit hard for the girls to get a go. (It’s) harder for the girls to break in.”

The emotional burden of her husband’s job must also be carried by wives of jockeys, when factoring in the risk aspect. This was noted in an interview with a jockey; when talking about the higher risk involved in steeplechase, his wife stated emphatically that he was never going to ride jumps again because they had mutually agreed the risks were too great (personal communication: 2012).

10.4.3 Trainers

Like female jockeys and apprentices, female trainers are also fairly commonplace within the Canterbury racing industry. The nature of the occupation as well as relations between trainers is such that gender does not feature as significantly as that within the jockey sub-culture. However, as trainer informant Tim notes when questioned whether there was any inequalities with regards to female trainers, there is still the occasional behaviour that goes against the norms of the racing community:

“Unfortunately there is a bit of that going on. An example of another trainer who let somebody’s horses out; he was lucky it was a female, because anybody else would have punched him, if it was a ‘him’. (A) terrible thing to do. You know there’s always one who bucks the system.”



Illustration 31: The blurring of boundaries between female trainer and trainer's wife necessitates various roles.

10.5 Partnerships and roles

In the past, the trainer's wife was noted for her role in maintaining the daily welfare of the apprentice jockeys registered to her husband (personal communication with late trainer's wife, Kate: 2012). As Martin Tollich suggests, with the breakdown of the training stable as an institution and the increased independence of apprentice jockeys, this role has largely been usurped (1995:108). Rebecca Cassidy claims that status for women in racing can only be claimed through consanguineal or conjugal relations with successful males already in the industry (2002b: 38), a sentiment echoed in the work of sociologist Janet Finch (1983). This implies an unbalanced relationship, whereby women are generally not noted for their personal achievements. In her research into the role of women in American Harness racing, Elizabeth Larsen claims that within that racing industry, most women generally end up marrying trainers and function in the background, purely to further their spouse's career (2006:139,140). Although the media chooses to concentrate on the male primary participant, gaining him status with the general public without acknowledging any input by his wife or partner. There are however numerous examples of partnerships noted and males frequently ascribe their success as trainers to the support of their wives and partners. This is understood from a discussion with trainer Tim and his wife Martha:

Tim: "It's a two person job,"

Martha: "(Yes) it's a team effort."

Tim: "I'd find it bloody hard to do, if it was just me and the horses."

In her research into the incorporation of wives into their husband's jobs, sociologist Janet Finch notes that certain male occupations demand more participation from their wives than other jobs, both structuring and limiting the wife's daily life (1983:2). Since many of the wives of male trainers come from equine backgrounds, this facilitates their incorporation into various roles including stable-hands, track-riders, assistant trainers and general secretarial work. A few of the wives and partners also have licenses to train racehorses, noted quite frequently with a horse identified as having a joint trainer in the race book. For those who do not practice as a trainer themselves, the encompassing nature of their husband's job is particularly pertinent to the life of a trainer's wife, where the early morning starts and seven-day-week nature of the job of trainer creates limited scope for any sort of break. She is forced to embrace the life that he has chosen; in this respect, the requirement for acceptance of this role necessitates at the very least a pre-existing love of horses and familiarity with the encompassing nature of the racing industry. As trainer's wife Liz states, when questioned if they will have a break over Christmas:

"No. In fact at this time of the year we try to double-up and work more hours so that we can give the girls more time off over the Christmas period. Occasionally we will be able to get a long weekend off during the year once or twice, but other than that, it was a week off in Samoa after the Winter Carnival, and then back to the 7 days a week. We can't take time off because we have responsibility for the horses – they are a seven days a week job."

These sentiments were echoed by various informants in the industry, including the breeding sector. Breeder Stacey also pointed to the impact of their career choices on their children; being tied to the farm during the breeding season, the daily routines of stable duties and also the emotional challenges of dealing with young horses who will be sent off to the sales (personal communication: 2012).

The commitment required (investing in cross-species intimacies) makes it difficult to separate work from leisure, thereby encouraging the mutual involvement of marital partners. Frequently, the wives of trainers can act as advocates for their husband's work, in theory drawing on the highly-skilled nature of their supportive roles (Finch 1983: 89, 99). Within the Canterbury racing industry, this is demonstrated in examples of instances where travelling is necessary in order to take one horse to a specific race meeting on the North Island or taking a group of yearlings up to the national sales, requiring the partner to stay home and manage the rest of the horses (personal communication with trainers and breeders: 2011). Finch does not attribute

the secondary nature of wives' work to male superiority, but to the nature of the 'team', with the husband as leader (1983:146). This sentiment is echoed within the Canterbury industry especially where it is the husband or male partner who holds the license specific to the nature of their work.

10.6 Female spectators

In her focus on British race-goers, Kate Fox identifies a higher proportion of women race-goers than at other sporting events, as well as within her category of 'socials' (2005: 3, 14). The average race-meeting at Riccarton Park sees a low number of female spectators however this is greatly increased at major race meetings such as a cup meeting. There are significant differences between these two types of meetings in that a cup meeting has noteworthy media attention, is an elaborate social event involving fashionable displays, ritual drinking and popularised gambling. In comparison, the average race meeting will have far fewer spectators, is televised purely on racing channels and spectators dress far more casually. Spectators generally are 'die-hard' racing fans, or occasional racegoers, with the bulk of the public made up of secondary participants, owners and their connections. This suggests that like Fox's findings, the social element of racing is a greater attraction for most female race-goers who do not have a connection with horses or racing. It is at these meetings that the fashion-element or 'parading' identified by Koenraad Kuiper (2009) in chapter 8 is most evident. Observations at a Sunday race-meeting at Motukarara racecourse (2011) noted a high proportion of females due to large courtesy facilities, with their ritual having little to do with following the actual spectator racing ritual. Conversations with participants revealed that while facilities claim to be open and 'family friendly', there remains a gap in practicality for women. This is seen in the lack of facilities geared towards children or mothers (such as no facilities for baby-changing at Riccarton Park).

10.7 Summary

Women have traditionally played a supporting role in the racing industry, with prominence being placed on masculine abilities of strength in handling horses. In his research into the feminisation of the New Zealand racing profession, Martin Tollich (1996) draws on a combination of the feminist movement pushing for equality for women, combined with economic trends in racing, to explain the more recent acceptance of women into this sphere. I propose that Canterbury horse-racing articulates with North Island and Australian racing in terms of a scale of opportunity and remuneration that introduces a 'pull factor' for male jockeys. These factors in

addition to a greater focus on an emotional understanding of the horse rather than a power-relationship, has seen a massive influx of female participants in roles once previously reserved for males. Through an examination of the roles women take on through partnerships or marriage, such as acting as proxy-trainer in taking a horse to the North Island for a race while their husband stays home to continue training, or staying home to care for broodmares while their partner goes to the auction, enables a better understanding of the particular nature of the woman's role in the racing industry. This leads to a deeper emphasis on the abilities of women in occupations at the race-track, rather than a focus on them as merely fashion-models in a spectator capacity.

Conclusion

'A bloke actually said to me once that to make a horse win in a race, it takes ten people. There's the trainer's got to do his job right, the blacksmith's got to do his job right ... and if one hasn't done his job right the other one can't do theirs right. That's how it all sort of gels itself into place.'

Conversation with jockey Sam, 2012.

This thesis explores complementary aspects of a complex phenomenon, necessitating a multi-sited methodology and an analysis informed by the assemblage concept. The primary aim of this thesis has been to analyse the social and financial investments participants in the thoroughbred racing industry make and relate them to the emotional attachments that develop between human and horse. I have given specific focus to each constituent sector of the industry, emphasising the cyclic phases integral to breeding, training, exchanging, racing, and caring for horses. This has involved consideration of the functional spaces for breeding, selling and training horses, where specific participants interact with horses and with other participants in the industry in various ways. In so doing, I have outlined a networked assemblage of roles, relations, and practices that revolve around the thoroughbred horse. Heterogeneous as it may be, the racing community is nonetheless understood as a distributed community of practice involving complementary forms of expertise. Situated in relation to a broader set of regional racing industries, this account of South Island racing in New Zealand has also explored the history of domestication by which the thoroughbred breed has been developed through particular cultural institutions. I have been concerned with the emotional intimacies between participants and their horses, whilst acknowledging the tensions between sentimentality and instrumentality that arise from the use of horses as revenue-generating commodities. The notion of an interspecies form of fictive kinship has been utilised to characterize human-horse attachments.

The multi-sited nature of this ethnographic research is demonstrated through the focus on specific racecourses, the Karaka auction and through fieldwork conducted at a number of different sites throughout the Canterbury region. Breeding, selling, and racing horses involves the movement of horses within and beyond New Zealand. This serves to build network connections that iterate on-going patterns of exchange, involving sentient beings, financial transactions, and social relations, that also reveals for us the constantly emerging structure of the horse racing assemblage. A horse might be born on a Canterbury stud farm, be auctioned at Karaka and move to race in Australia or Hong Kong. Similarly, Canterbury horses might live in a training stable at Riccarton Park, but race one week in Invercargill and the next in Auckland, participate in trials the following week at Ashburton and then

race in Timaru. Much more is happening here than merely the transportation of horses; entangled with the history of any one horse's movements are the services of differently skilled professionals, the functional locations associated with them, and the transfer of affect as human-horse attachments are made, severed, and remade.

In chapter three, I have focussed on the history of the thoroughbred, locating horse-racing within its social context in order to make sense of the actors, the relations, and the practices comprising the modern system. Throughout this chapter, I explored the shifting motivational factors and the extent to which the current industry has changed with respect to social and financial motivations. In relation to these factors, I considered emotional attachment as a deep and inherent affection for the thoroughbred, understood in terms of fictive kinship. I identified the significance of women as primary participants within the different sectors of the racing industry over the last few decades. Previously, traditional norms had prevented women from pursuing careers in horse-racing; a situation that remains a distinct obstacle in other parts of the world⁵⁵. The historical context presented in this chapter provides essential background for the sustained exploration of the role of women in chapter ten. By adopting an historical perspective I have been able to demonstrate socio-cultural change and continuity. The high cost of stallions and the emphasis on bloodlines continue with similar emphasis in today's industry. Finally, this historical focus has also enabled me to explore family participation in the racing industry as tradition, obligation, and perpetuated devotion to thoroughbreds.

In chapter four, I have looked at the role of humans in domestication, bringing the thoroughbred breed into being for the purpose of competitive racing. This has also entailed consideration of the mutualism that exists between human participant and horse; an aspect investigated further in subsequent chapters in regard to different participant groups. A focus on mutualism also highlights the consequences of human intervention; social and financial aspirations of breeding a winner often surpass the ideal of breeding out weaknesses. The limitation of this focus has been in a failure to pursue this negative side of domestication; thoroughbred breakdowns remain a negative aspect of the industry and one which is currently receiving international academic interest. My attention to domestication of the thoroughbred has drawn from Donna Haraway's natureculture theory, highlighting the blurring of boundaries between nature and culture (Haraway: 2006). Human investment in developing this breed has seen large financial and social contributions made in an effort to mould and preserve a breed that essentially retains the element of 'nature'.

⁵⁵ See Rebecca Cassidy's ethnography in Newmarket, England and Kentucky, U.S.A., Kate Fox's study of British racecourse culture and Carol Case's ethnography of the American racing backstretch.

By drawing on Actor Network theory, I have used assemblage to link the social and financial ties between the three participant sectors of the industry in terms of their relations with the horses, locations, practices and each other. I have analysed factors that suggest that a community of practice is embedded within the assemblage. These include the sharing of particular information about the horse (in the form of nick-names), shared facilities in the form of the Karaka auction facility or particular sales like the South Island mixed bloodstock sale, a shared sense of kinship with the horse (from its birth through to the end of its racing /breeding career) and shared knowledge and services particular to their industry (such as the veterinarian or farrier). In chapter five, I continue using assemblage to demonstrate how the horse, the central focus of the breeding community, is given a sense of belonging through the particular form of branding practiced in this region. This practice legitimates the status of the horse within the specific category called 'thoroughbred' and connects the horse to the governing body (NZTR) through data held on its breeding and achievements. The practice of branding also raises an interesting point in the co-existence of affinity akin to kinship relations in conjunction with ownership of the horse. I contend that branding does not signify ownership since it does not symbolise a particular owner's details. Rather this practice signifies membership of the racing community. In terms of the intimacy and emotional investment made in specific horses, I establish that in some cases these bonds compare to those of proxy family members. In my attempt to better define this particular form of interspecies kinship, I have used the views of both Schusky and Sahlin, which leads to the assumption that this relationship is best classified as 'fictive-kinship' (Schusky: 1972), (Sahlin: 2011). My focus on nick-naming the horse supports this proposition of an interspecies kinship in that it depicts a close association of 'knowing' the horse on a personal level. It would be naive to think that the emotional investment of the human-horse relationship is a universally shared element throughout the Canterbury thoroughbred racing industry. The fact remains that a significant number of thoroughbreds are sent to 'the hounds' or shipped overseas from Gore (southern South Island); a viable option for some involved in this industry.⁵⁶ The limitation of my focus on intimacy is noted in conjunction with the lack of information on horse breakdowns (and consequent social, financial and emotional implications), that a further tracing into this component is essential in fully understanding the racehorse assemblage. The element of kinship is however still significant. Examples highlight the strong element of sharing in essential life processes of birthing and dying, choosing to forego sound financial options (making distinct sacrifices that reflect a form of 'financial altruism'), in many cases through deep emotional connection and moral commitment to specific horses.

⁵⁶ I held a conversation subsequent to writing up this thesis, with a prominent greyhound breeder/trainer, who advertises regularly for disposal of unwanted horses. I was interested to know what sort of response he had received from the racing community; he claimed that he occasionally had one or two offers of horses, but they were always ones that were badly injured and not merely ones that couldn't 'make it'. He added that those ones were sent for disposal at Gore.

In chapter six, I drew on the work of Rebecca Cassidy in defining the motivation of the auction as economic exchange, but also as an important part in the liminal journey of the young horse into adulthood (2005). Cassidy identifies the auction as an unequal sharing of information; a point that I have developed further into the concept of a racing community of insiders drawn together through shared interest in the horse. Using Moore and Myerhoff's theories on secular ritual, I showed a connection between the ritualized behaviour of the primary participants and their motivations, drawing on what Rebecca Cassidy calls a means of 'falling in love' with the horse, thereby establishing an emotional connection (Cassidy: 2005). The three stages associated with the auction ritual include the ceremonial analysis of pedigree, ritualised viewing of the horses and participation in the auction. Through a focus on these three stages, the investment value of the horse is established while the commentary of the auctioneer connects the sectors of breeding and racing. It is through this essential stage in the life process of each horse, that social and financial investments are established. This is not to say though, that horses which are exchanged outside the auction arena eliminate this phase of establishing 'value'; many horses will be sold or leased on to other owners through the work of bloodstock agents, and although the financial investment is adequately established, they lack the social connotation of having attained a certain financial amount at a prestigious sale.

The cyclic nature of the racing industry is revealed through a focus on the assemblage connecting the three sectors of the industry, namely that horses are born and prepared for auction through their first two years of life in the stud, attain ritualised significance as potential racehorses through the auction and are 'broken', named and trained to race in the training sector. Some will return back to the stud sector after their racing careers, in order to repeat the cycle with their progeny. This cycle of connection between the three sectors is repeated each year and is also noted in the cyclic nature of racing; horses are trained daily following a set routine leading towards racing specifically chosen races until they are deemed necessary for retirement. In chapter seven, I have also continued charting the racing assemblage; I have applied Callon's 'translation' in my examination of the nature of relations between primary participants (including the trainer, stable-hand and jockey/apprentice, as well as with secondary participants such as the veterinarian), to demonstrate how the actors recognise and organise other actors and modalities in their connection with each other (Callon: 1983). It is due to the unbalanced financial nature, yet mutual need for such relationships, that 'permitted disrespect' in the form of joking relationships is identified between the trainer and veterinarian. In terms of the human-horse relationship, I have focussed on the haptic experience that enables human handlers to be accepted into the thoroughbred horse culture through touch. I consider the training sector as the final liminal phase for the neophyte horse in becoming fully accepted as a racehorse, through a focus on elements that draw the

young horse into the cultural realm of racing. These include the process of 'breaking' the horse and formal naming; the continuity of which draws on human importance attributed to heredity. I have used Kirrilly Thompson's (2010) 'longitudinal' perspective to contextualise the nature of human-horse relations in this sector; this has led to a description of the intimacy or emotional attachment that is created despite the high turn-over of horses that pass through each participant's career.

Subsequent to demonstrating the social and financial investment and emotional attachment evident in the racing industry, my second aim in this research has been to provide an analysis of the race-course and the rituals which give particular meaning to the participants. Participation in this community of practice is regulated both physically in the form of fences and gates and expressively by health and safety restrictions. I have proposed that full inclusion into the racing community is restricted through the regulation of haptic experience or the regulations allowing only specific humans to 'touch' the horse; a simple feature that has strong social and financial undertones. This ability denotes membership of the racing community, as all those within both primary and supplementary participant groups are eligible to do so. In stark contrast is the punter or racing public, who are not entitled to 'touch' the horses at all. Their presence at the racecourse on an average race-day or work day is merely additional and does not have any specific bearing on the function of those practices. Festival or carnival race days are noted for the distinct change in emphasis; the role of the spectator is greatly increased in prominence and becomes of note. This leads to the conclusion that the desire to reflect a sense of belonging within the community or connection with a particular horse is often demonstrated through seemingly knowledgeable ramblings by members of the general public at the parade ring or barriers. Further to the aim of analysing ritualised behaviour at the race-course, I pursued Kon Kuiper's call for an analysis of the actual race - looking at the nature of the race, the manner in which primary participants relate to each other and the cultural norms that prescribe their actions (2004). This specific focus has allowed for a deeper analysis of the human-horse relationship on the part of the jockey, whose connection with the horse is defined in terms of the isopraxis phenomenon and described using Kirrilly Thompson's idea of Centaur imagery (2010). In my analysis, the race is seen as human ability (jockey and trainer), supported by the owner's finances and stable hands' physical work, harnessing the natural instinct of the horse to run. The natural cultural order between human and horse is demonstrated both through the context of ritualised behaviour of the human participants and the behaviour of the racehorse.

A focus on the race highlights the risk regulations which permeate the industry, and articulate with the regulation of haptic experience. My aim was to deconstruct risk into its relevant parts, looking at the importance of each in terms of the participants'

motivation. Based on Koenraad Kuiper's notion of both physical and financial risk prevalent in the industry, I have examined those risks more closely and included the idea of emotional risk (2009). I contend that emotional attachment is considered a risk for many of the participants and relates strongly to the nature of both physical and financial risks associated with the racehorse, which is why the title of my thesis concerns the intimacy and investment in the racing industry. In terms of the assemblage perspective used throughout this thesis, these risks identified contribute towards an understanding of the webs of relationships between various actors. The horse is the focal point from which webs of relationships between various actors, settings and things can be traced and as Caplan notes, the context of these is crucial for structuring the way risk is viewed (2000: 25,26). This is particularly evident in the fact that in riding, racehorses are not considered as the risk, but rather that the act of falling off is hazardous. Using Mary Douglas's theories on risk, I have examined the motivation of participants in terms of the benefits they receive (1982, 1986, and 1992). Of particular note, is her theory on subjective immunity, which when applied to different sectors of racing, gives a plausible explanation for the reasons people continue in this industry despite adversity. It is through this focus on shared risk that the racing community is essentially defined.

In chapter ten, I looked at the role of women particularly due to the historical definitions of racing as 'a man's world'. Contrasts with other racing ethnographies have determined a unique situation in the New Zealand industry and specifically the South Island, with the rapid influx of female participants into traditionally male occupations (most notably the jockey profession) (Case 1991, Cassidy 2002, Fox 2005). Using Martin Tollich's study on the feminization of the jockey profession in New Zealand, I have examined the socio-economic factors leading to the emergence of women in the industry (1996). Based on current human-horse studies, I have further drawn on the emotional connection or intimacy claimed by women in their desire to be with horses. I have questioned female participants in the industry on their motivations for participation, experiences and feelings about the industry and the horses, noting the essential elements of a desire to succeed and a love of horses. The limitation of this research has not enabled an in-depth analysis of the long-term participation of women, nor an attention to the development of their roles in terms of investment made in the industry (such as the transition from stable-hand to jockey apprentice, or from jockey to trainer). Looking at the nature of male-female partnerships within the industry in this region, I have noted the essential role played by many women and the structure of those roles. The limitation of this focus has been a failure to encompass the role of the family surrounding these partnerships and the significance of investment (social, financial and emotional) made by these families, that contributes to the idea of the racing 'game' and horse addiction.

While other ethnographies of the racing industry describe traditions that conform to largely universal characteristics, the specific nature and functioning of the New Zealand racing industry and specifically that of the Canterbury region is noted for its unique properties (Case: 1991, Cassidy: 2002, 2003, Fox: 2005). It is unfortunate that the public image of racing denotes a purely social and financial emphasis, leaving out the strong, equally important motivational factor of equine attachment. In the Canterbury region, the strong racing tradition in conjunction with this emotional connection with the horse is seen in its significance since racing in the region is given a somewhat commercial 'back-seat' to the more financially viable regions of the North Island and Australia. As I have shown in this thesis, intimacy or emotional attachment is a significant factor shared by the majority of participants in this region, with love of horses identified by most as a reason for being in the industry, as one informant stated:

"It would be hard to work in this industry if you didn't."

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Addendum

General outline of questions used during structured interviewing

1. What drew you to thoroughbred racing; a career as a jockey/ stable-hand/ trainer?
2. What is the nature of your breeding operation? (How many mares do you have here, how many do you currently have racing, what is your full-time occupation?).
3. How do you choose the stallion to serve your mare/s?
4. Can you describe your relations with other Canterbury breeders/trainers?
5. Please describe your average day at the races.
6. Can you tell me about horses that you have bred and sold that have then had good careers?
7. What motivates you to be involved in racing?
8. How do you feel about the horses?
9. How do you recognise your horses – in the paddock, on the track?
10. Can you describe your relations with the trainer/s?
11. Can you describe your relations with other owners/ members in the syndicate?
12. Who has the strongest bond with the horse?
13. How do you feel about your horse (owners)?
14. Do you consider yourself the horse's 'caretaker'?
15. Can you describe instances of horses that showed 'heart'?
16. How do you choose your horses' names? Renaming and nicknames?
17. Can you tell me about your favourite horse/s and how you have bonded with them?
18. Can you tell me about the horses that you have lost (through death) and how you feel about this?
19. What do you think of the situation in the New Zealand racing industry, with regards to the tradition place of males in international horse racing?
20. How do you/ your family feel about the risks you have to take in your occupation?
21. Please can you explain the way your stables work, with regards to owners and the horses/broodmares they stable with you?
22. What sort of involvement do these owners have in the lives of their horses?
23. Which local stallions do you use?
24. Can you describe your relations with the veterinarians/farriers/stipendiary stewards?
25. Can you describe any instances where participants boycott certain bloodlines?
26. How do you feel about breeding racehorses? What motivates you?

27. What do you do with your retired horses?
28. What skills do you need to be a good jockey?
29. Can you describe your relationship with the horses?
30. Can you give me an example of the explanations you give the trainer/owner after the race?
31. Which horses do you find harder to ride?
32. How do you deal with the high risk?
33. Please describe your relations with other jockeys/ apprentices?
34. Can you describe an instance where you took a risk for the horse/the horse has shown trust for your decision?
35. Which name do you use for the horse (official breeding name or paddock name)?
36. What do you say to the horse during the race?
37. How do you prepare for race-riding?
38. How does your training work – tied to one trainer or casual rides?
39. Can you describe your other duties as an apprentice?
40. Can you (apprentices) describe your relations with the older jockeys?
41. What kind of attitude is considered appropriate in working with horses?
42. Can you describe what you are thinking before the race?
43. Can you describe what you are thinking during the race?
44. Can you describe what you are thinking after the race?
45. Can you describe an average working day?
46. Can you tell me how the male jockeys relate to you (female)?
47. How do you feel about the influx of female jockeys and apprentices?
48. What do other jockeys say during the race?
49. Can you describe a regular race-day routine (jockey, trainer, and stable-hand)?
50. What is your interest in the breeding side of racing (jockeys, stable-hands, apprentices, and track-staff)?
51. What sort of connection do you have with horses you have ridden (jockeys/apprentices)?
52. Can you tell me of any superstitions that you follow at the track?
53. Can you explain how you choose the moment to get a 'leg-up' without verbally communicating?

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Department of Anthropology

INFORMATION

You are invited to participate as a subject in the research project:

Socio-economics and equine attachment: the relationships of the Mid-Canterbury Thoroughbred racing industry.

The aim of this project is to identify the extent to which the social networks, subcultures, norms and values of the Thoroughbred horse industry all have as their basis, the human connection with the horse.

Your involvement in this project will be allowing the researcher to observe and participate in your daily tasks (where appropriate), asking questions relevant to these tasks. You are assured of the right to withdraw from the project at any time, including withdrawal of any information provided.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will be protected by the use of pseudonyms, as well as their right to refuse the use of certain data provided that they want omitted.

The project is being carried out as a requirement for the Masters degree by Colette Holdorf under the supervision of Dr. Piers Locke who can be contacted at 03 364 2987 Internal Phone: 4975. He will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

The project has been reviewed **and approved** by the Department of Anthropology, University of Canterbury.

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CONSENT FORM

Socio-economics and equine attachment: the relationships of the Mid-Canterbury Thoroughbred racing industry.

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

I note that the project has been reviewed *and approved* by the Department of Anthropology and the Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury.

NAME (please print):

.....

Signature:

Date: